

FOR THE COIN-OP ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

AUGUST 15, 1986

# PLAYMETER

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# PLAY METER

Twice a Month Publication for the Coin Operated Entertainment Industry

Member



## CONTENTS/ Volume 12, Number 14/August 15, 1986

### FEATURES

#### Quiz games no trivial pursuit ..... 16

Sales may have peaked in 1985, but new trivia and quiz games continue to be introduced, and the market for update kits remains strong as operators recognize the need to keep games fresh with new questions and categories.

#### Coinman: Maury Ferchen ..... 20

President of Bally's Coin-Op division as well as the American Amusement Machine Association, Maury Ferchen is hopeful that the industry's future will be marked by controlled growth and closer ties between operators, distributors, and manufacturers.

#### Bookkeeping features key game adjustments .... 24

The importance of making game adjustments to increase earnings can hardly be underestimated. Using bookkeeping features to determine those adjustments is a valuable skill that many, if not most, operators have failed to develop.

#### Computerizing calls for caution ..... 28

An operator, accountant, and developer of route-management software, Jeffrey Rosenthal has some basic advice for operators who haven't yet begun using computers to help run their businesses.

### DEPARTMENTS

- |                   |                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 5 Up Front        | 42 Frank's Cranks         |
| 6 News            | 45 Management             |
| 30 Players' Picks | 47 New Products           |
| 36 Equipment Poll | 51 Classified Advertising |
| 38 Record Charts  | 56 Guest Commentary       |
| 40 Tax Tips       |                           |

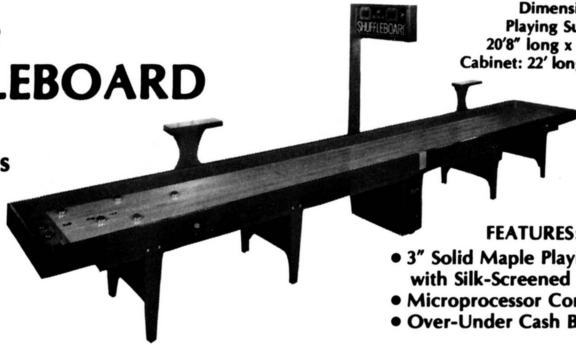
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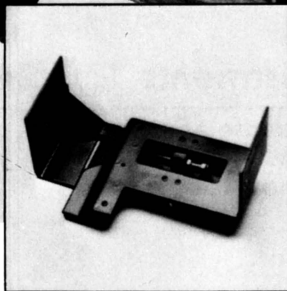
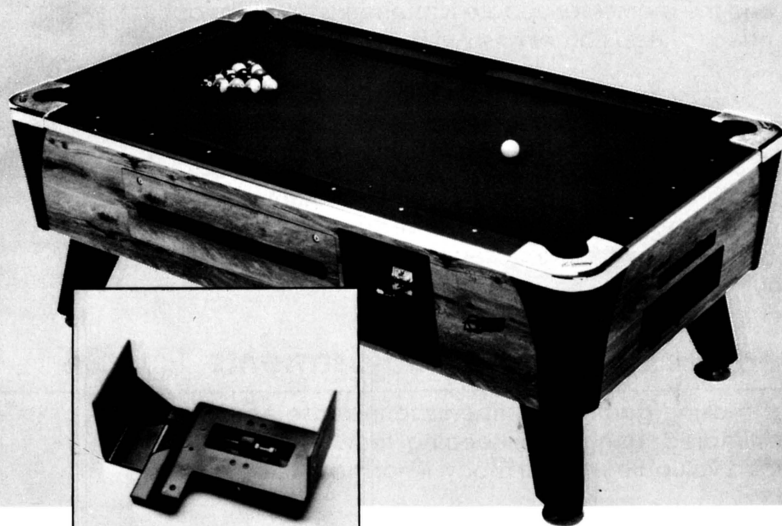
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**PLAY METER**, August 15, 1986. Volume 12, No. 14. Copyright 1986 by Skybird Publishing Company. **Play Meter** (ISSN 0162-1343)(USPS 358-305) is published twice monthly on the 1st and 15th of the month, except February, when it was issued once. Publishing office: 6600 Fleur de Lis, New Orleans, LA 70124. **Mailing address:** P.O. Box 24170, New Orleans, LA 70184, U.S.A.; phone: 504/488-7003. For subscriptions: 504/488-7003. Subscription rates: U.S. and Canada—\$50. Advertising rates are available on request. **No part of this magazine may be reproduced without express permission.** The editors are not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. **Play Meter** buys **all rights**, unless otherwise specified, to accepted manuscripts, cartoons, art work, and photographs. Second-class postage paid at New Orleans, LA 70113 and additional mailing offices. **Postmaster:** Send Form 3579 to **PLAY METER**, P.O. Box 24170, New Orleans, LA 70184.



## UP FRONT

# You can make a difference

*I am only one, but I am one.  
I can't do everything, but I can do something.  
And because I cannot do everything,  
I will not refuse to do anything that I can do.*

Vancie Todaro, the new president of the Amusement and Music Operators of Texas (AMOT), quoted those lines at the association's recent convention. She is often praised as one person who gives all she possibly can and offers sincere apologies when she can't do more. There are many people like Vancie in this industry, but, unfortunately, there also are many who believe that what they do doesn't make much difference.

Compared with other industries, the coin-op entertainment industry may be considered small, but that only makes each member of the industry that much more important. Manufacturers and distributors often are quoted as saying that the operators make the industry, or a healthy operator is need for a healthy industry. These are not hollow statements, because the operators who make their living by placing games and other equipment in locations truly are the lifeblood of this industry.

When talking with operators at state shows, it amazes me how often an operator will tell me, "I'm just a small operator, my opinion doesn't mean much." But, on the contrary, his opinion is what shapes the entire industry. When he doesn't buy, manufacturers adjust production accordingly, and distributors plan their purchases to fit needs. During the boom years, it was the operators who bought all the equipment that poured out from the manufacturers. And it was the operators who first realized what was happening and who first started making the needed adjustments.

The Texas show had a good turnout of operators concerned about the future of the industry, but many were dismayed that several of the distributors in the state elected not to show. A state show is geared toward operators, and it is surprising that distributors, whose customers make the effort to attend, don't feel it's worthwhile.

The manufacturers are battling a cancer

spreading throughout the industry in the form of counterfeit and illegally imported games. Many operators maintain the position that they will save money any way they can; they claim that manufacturers have always taken advantage of them, so it's a way to return the favor. They can't understand why a copy or a parallel import is "so much cheaper" and just assume that it's because manufacturers are charging more than the game is worth. Operators justify their actions by saying their competitors do it, and they don't really believe that their few purchases really have any effect on the industry.

It's sad to see such a rift developing that could be resolved. Illegal copies and parallel boards wouldn't be here if no one bought them. Maury Ferchen, in his interview in this issue, says that one of his goals is to improve communication in the industry. He wants to hear operators' opinions. Look, there may be some unscrupulous manufacturing people out there, but there could just as easily be unscrupulous operators. Should everyone suffer because of it? I think not.

The associations (the American Amusement Machine Association and the Amusement and Music Operators Association) are planning to work together on this and other industry issues. They aren't doing it behind anyone's back or being underhanded about it. They want your opinion, and if you believe your voice doesn't count, please read Vancie's quote again. You can't do everything, no one expects you to. But you really can do something.

*Valerie Cognevich*

Valerie Cognevich  
Director of Advertising/  
Executive Assistant



# NEWS

## Merit buys Nomac assets

Following three months of negotiation, Merit Industries has agreed to buy the assets of Nomac, Ltd., August 18.

The purchase includes all of Nomac's tooling, patents, trademarks, copyrights, and inventory. Merit will maintain all Nomac personnel and facilities. Nomac principals Fred Kelley and Bill McClure will be available on a consulting basis as needed.

Merit, manufacturer of *Bull Buster Darts*, will add *Pub Time Darts* to its product line. Peter Feuer, president of Merit, said, "We have acquired a well established product line that is well liked by players and operators. We can greatly expand the market share the product enjoys, and we plan to do this by offering a support program of league and tournament promotions, outstanding service through our network of distributors, and engineering strength to maintain the product at its technical peak."

Feuer said Merit will continue to develop promotional campaigns and work with the newly formed AMOA Dart Association. ●

## FBI seizes Faco West goods, records

FBI agents looking for counterfeit and parallel games seized business records, 70 printed-circuit boards, and 571 marquees July 22 in executing a federal search warrant of Faco West, Inc., a North Hollywood, Calif., distributor.

According to Robert Fay, American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) director of industry affairs, the seizure resulted in a "massive" amount of evidence for the FBI to sift through. Some of the seized boards were parallel imports, he said, but the exact numbers of parallel and counterfeit boards seized won't be known until the

boards are tested.

Fay said he will go to Los Angeles in September, after federal authorities have been able to review evidence obtained in the search, to recommend charges to the U.S. attorney.

Depending on circumstances in the case, charges could be included in a bill of information and the case could be brought before a federal magistrate. Otherwise, the government could seek indictments by bringing the case before a federal grand jury. Charges are expected to include trademark and copyright infringement. Conviction on the charges carries a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment for each count of the former and two years' for each count of the latter.

Faco West, with William B. Faith, Jr., named as the company's owner, is a

defendent in a civil suit filed in May by Nintendo of America, which charged that the company infringed Nintendo's copyright of its *VS. Excitebike* game. As a result of the suit, a federal court in June enjoined Faco West from importing video games copyrighted by Nintendo of America.

Fay said more searches like that of Faco West are expected to take place soon throughout the U.S. There are "about five priority cases" to be made in cracking down on U.S. distributors of parallel games and counterfeits, he said, adding that the "targets" are "renegade, outlaw distributors and big operators."

The Faco West search resulted from an investigation stemming from operator complaints, according to Fay, who said he's been receiving about five calls a week from operators



Sony's Erol Uckan explains the company's player mechanism used in Seeburg's *LaserMusic* compact-disc jukebox to service technicians attending a Seeburg training session in Rosemont, Ill.



telling of competitors operating illegal games. He said the number of calls increases after some action, such as the Facó West search, takes place. He refers the complaints to the FBI, which then may interview the suspected operator in hopes of being led to the source of his illegal games.

Explaining that he has the names of "hundreds and hundreds" of operators of illegal games, Fay said, "I think every operator at one time or another" has operated counterfeit or parallel games. ●

## AMOA recommends standards

The AMOA, through its industry-standardization subcommittee, has proposed several standards for parts and components for the coin-op amusement industry. The AMOA is urging manufacturers to follow the standards, which include the following:

"All coin door locks and cash door locks shall be a standard 7/8-inch barrel.

"All games shall have a power switch located on the upper left hand section of the cabinet.

"All games using electronic sound shall have a volume control located on the left hand inside of the coin door, easily reachable and accessible through the coin door.

"All games and coin machines shall accept Canadian coins or adequately reject them so as not to cause coin jams.

"All pinballs should utilize the standardized bookkeeping procedure with the same sequence of functions enabling owners/operators to easily access and remember the format for calling up pinball bookkeeping."

The standardization subcommittee, which is under the education committee, was formed this year. Members include Craig Johnson of TATAKA in Framington, Utah; Todd Erickson of Summit Amusement in St. Paul, Minn.; Joe Dillon of Williams Electronics; Steve Blattspieler of Bally; Frank Ballouz of Nintendo of America, and Dan Van Elderen of Star Games in Milpitas, Calif. ●

## Thousands compete in video tournament

More than 2,000 players from across the U.S. competed at more than 300 Bally's Aladdin's Castle arcades in

the fourth annual Video Game Masters Tournament during the last weekend in June.

Players competed on more than 120 different games—ranging from oldies like *Ms. Pac-Man* and *Galaga* to more recent videos like *Sarge*, *Choplifter*, and *Super Mario Bros.*—to ensure that each participant could compete on game with which he was familiar. The tournament's high scorers, 120 in all, will be listed in the next edition of the *Guinness Book of World Records*, which has a cumulative total of 51 million copies in print. In addition to the book listing, local and national winners were awarded other prizes, including trophies and certificates.

Participants were charged a \$5 entry fee, half of which was donated to the March of Dimes to help prevent birth defects. In addition to tournament eligibility, players received "Video Game Master" identification cards and certificates entitling them to free tokens before and after the competition.

The tournament was co-sponsored by the U.S. National Video Game Team and Bally, which promoted the contest with posters and brochures in all their locations providing tournament information. Marquee attractions also were placed above all tournament games to alert players.

"This was without a doubt the most successful Masters competition ever held," said Steve Harris, project director of the video team. "We had a record number of participants—more than 2,000 in three days—and raised a lot of money for a very worthy cause. The whole industry should be proud that Bally hosted this event. It sparked a tremendous amount of enthusiasm. "When we obtained the rights to the tournament," Harris continued, "our initial concern was to find locations to host the event. By chance we were led to Bally, whose wholesome environment and dedication to the player were perfectly suited for this type of promotion."

The tournament received local and national media coverage, including mention on the March of Dimes telethon and in *The New York Times*.

Jim Vollandt of La Verne, Calif., who once played *Joust* for 67 hours to become the video-game marathon champion, said the tournament is "the only avenue that players can take to get official verified scores. I wish there were more video-game contests like this one."

Verified video-game high scores

# THE CALENDAR

## September 19-21

New York State Coin Machine Association 4th Annual Convention, Fallsview Hotel, Ellenville, N.Y. Contact Curtiss B. Matterson, executive director, NYSCMA, 427 Kenwood Ave., Delmar, NY 12054, or call (518) 439-0981.

## September 28-30

Amusement Business Seminar at the Sands Hotel in Atlantic City, N.J. Contact the Amusement Business Sponsorship Seminar, 14 Music Circle East, Nashville, TN 37203, (615) 748-8120.

## October 23-26

National Convention-Exhibit of Vending and Foodservice Management, McCormick Place, Chicago, Ill. Organized by the National Automatic Merchandising Association. Contact Walter W. Reed at (312) 346-0370. 6,000 registrants are expected.

## November 6-8

AMOA Expo '86, the Amusement & Music Operators Association's 37th international exhibition and seminar for the coin-operated games, music, and vending industry, Hyatt Regency Chicago. Contact Amusement & Music Operators Association, 111 E. Wacker Drive, Chicago, IL 60601; (312) 644-6610.

## International Shows

### October 2-16

Electronics Computer Tour, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, (optional extensions—China or Singapore). Featuring Japan Electronics Show, all Japan Audio Fair, International Optoelectronic Show, Korea Electronics Show, Taiwan Electronics Show, and Hong Kong Electronics Fair. Contact Commerce Tours International, Inc., 870 Market Street, Suite 708, San Francisco, CA 94102, (415) 433-3072.

### October 8-9

JAMMA 24th Annual Amusement Machine Show, Tokyo Ryusu Center (TRC), 1-1, Heiwajima 6-chome, Ota-ku, Tokyo 143. Organizers: Japan Amusement Machinery Manufacturers' Association, Room 704, Nagata-Cho TBR Bldg., 2-10-2, Nagata-Cho, Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo 100, Japan. Telephone 593-2563/4.

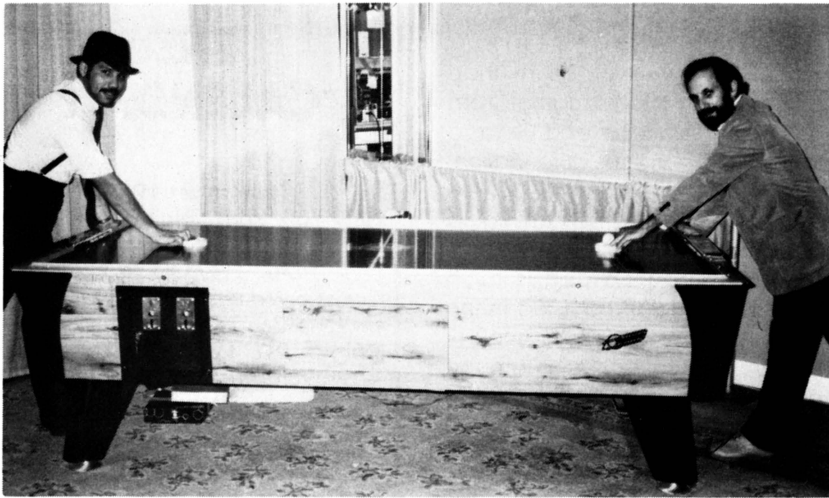


Table hockey champion Robert Hernandez, left, and Dynamo's Mark Robbins demonstrate Dynamo's new table.



Texas operators getting a first-hand look at Seeburg's compact-disc phonograph keep company representatives busy.



Singer Roy Head receives the Texas Rising Star Award from Vancie Todaro, new president of the Amusement and Music Operators of Texas (AMOT), at the association's recent convention banquet. Also participating in the ceremony are, from left, Ronnie Daniel, AMOT past president, Jerry Kaler, the association's executive director, and Ross Todaro.

were first published in the 1983 edition of the *Guinness Book*, which allotted a small space to track the skills of a dozen top players.

"We'd been getting calls concerning video games for almost two years," said David Boehm, editor of the book's American version. "After we ran the section on video games, we got tremendous feedback. More inquiries were made regarding this section than any other in the book's history."

High scores on coin-operated video games now take up almost two full pages in every edition of the book. ●

## Texas operators meet

Nearly a hundred Texas operators met in Austin for the Amusement and Music Operators of Texas (AMOT) annual convention in mid-July.

Seeburg exhibited its new *Laser-Music* phonograph designed to play compact discs. It was the first time since its formal introduction to distributors a month ago that the company had shown the phonograph publicly. Operators seen to be excited about its possibilities; the Seeburg booth remained busy. Mobile Record Company, a frequent exhibitor at trade shows (the only one-stop to do so), passed out its compact-disc availability catalog of more than 8,000 titles.

In a surprise announcement, Ed Blankenbeckler, Seeburg president, said the company recently hired William Guler, previous with Handleman in Chicago, to organize Seeburg's entrance into the one-stop business. "We want to protect our hardware," said Blankenbeckler. "Selling compact discs fits into our plans nicely."

Bally's new *Rampage* was shown in Southwest Vending's booth to enthusiastic crowds. "This game looks like one of the best Bally has come out with lately," said an operator waiting his turn to play.

Mark Robbins, director of promotional sales for Dynamo hockey, and Robert Hemande, the national air-cushioned table-hockey champion, demonstrated Dynamo's new air-cushioned hockey game. It is an elegant piece of equipment, similar to Dynamo's pool tables. "Air-cushioned hockey is a lot of fun, and can make operators a good return on investment with a little promotion," Robbins said.

Manufacturer representatives attending the show included Atari's Dick Needleman, Nintendo's Art Gallager, Merit's David Rubinstein and Don





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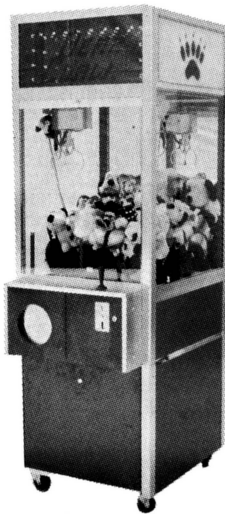


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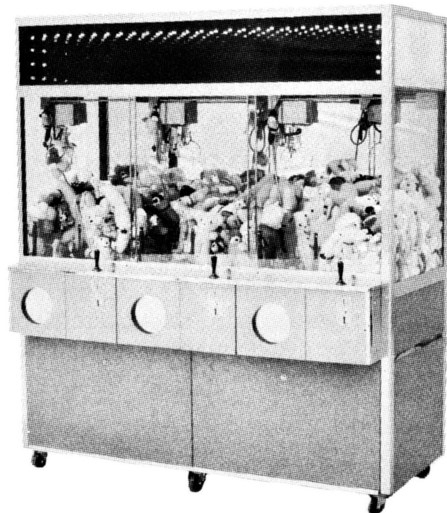
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Fuller, Ed and Mark Blankenbeckler of Seeburg, Tim Jackson of Romstar, Bill Rickett of Dynamo, Byron Cook of Tradewest, Mike and Kim Yaffa of Status Games, Ron Yaffe of Showcase International, and Emil Marcet of Valley.

The Texas Rising Star award was presented at the convention banquet to Roy Head, a country-and-western singer who has had 32 songs on *Billboard's* Top 100 record charts. His song "Treat Her Right" sold a million copies. Head and his wife were there to accept the award.

On Sunday following the show, the association sponsored a pool tournament, which was conducted for the fifth year in a row by Willie Elder. Elder's wife kept track of the progression of players. "We are very grateful to Willie and his wife," said AMOT executive director Pat Miller, and operator Bob Minnick added, "We would like to thank Willie for all he has done for our tournament. Willie has contributed greatly to coin-op pool tournaments."

## VNEA championships held

More than \$25,000 in prize money was awarded to winners of the sixth annual Valley National 8-Ball League Association International Championships at the Bally Grand Hotel in Las Vegas June 1-8.

In the men's division, Red Sails No. 2, representing Stansfield Vending, Inc., of LaCrosse, Wis., won the team competition and a \$5,000 prize. Scott

Kitto, representing Quad Cities Amusements, Inc., of Davenport, Iowa, won the singles championship and \$1,000.

For the second year in a row, the winning team in the women's division was Cannon Lane of D&R Star of Rochester, Minn. Chris Glass, also representing D&R Star, won the women's singles title. Cannon Lane received \$2,250 for its team victory, Glass \$600 for her singles championship.

The winners, who received plaques in addition to the cash prizes, emerged from the 23,754 players in 29 states and three Canadian provinces who participated in Valley National 8-Ball Leagues in 1986.

The Las Vegas competition, played on 90 Valley Cougar ZD4 tables, included 16 women and 32 men playing for the singles titles and 160 men and 80 women vying for team championships.

## Seeburg opens CD one-stop

In conjunction with the introduction of its *LaserMusic* compact-disc jukebox, Seeburg Phonograph Corp. has begun operating a one-stop exclusively for compact discs.

Ed Blankenbeckler, Seeburg president, said the national one-stop selling directly to operators "is a way to protect the razor by making sure the blades are always available."

William Guler, formerly a top-level executive of H.R. Handleman (called by Blankenbeckler the "world's lar-

gest rack-jobber"), joined Seeburg July 28 as general manager of the one-stop, named Seeburg Compact Disc Distributing Corporation.

The company already has begun taking orders and shipping discs, Guler said, and is expected to be operating full-scale by the end of August. "We're trying to get set up as soon as possible," he said, "because the machines are rolling out."

Seeburg announced the formation of its one-stop while exhibiting at the recent Amusement and Music Operators of Texas (AMOT) convention. Another one-stop exhibiting at the show, Mobile Record Service of Pittsburgh, has been an ardent supporter of Seeburg's compact-disc phonograph and told operators attending the show that more than 8,000 compact-discs titles are available. •

## O'Reilly conviction upheld

The July 24, 1985, conviction of Timothy O'Reilly on charges of dealing in counterfeit coin-op games has been upheld by the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Lark Tanksley, who prosecuted the O'Reilly case, said that the appeals court decided the government had provided sufficient evidence that O'Reilly had violated federal copyright laws.

O'Reilly, a 23-year-old Canadian, was sentenced September 11 to five years' imprisonment and ordered to pay restitution to Data East USA. He was released on probation after serving little more than two months of the sentence. •

## AMOA expects no Berne action in '86

The Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA), having followed congressional discussions of the Berne Convention, expects no Senate action in 1986 regarding the U.S. joining convention.

The Berne Convention is an international agreement for the protection of literary and artistic works dating back to 1886. Approximately 75 countries are signatories of the convention, but the U.S. is not one of them.

According to Mark Griffiths, AMOA director of government affairs, "It is unlikely that the Senate will come to any agreement this year, because joining the Berne Convention could require changes in U.S. copyright law.



Winners of the men's division at the sixth annual Valley National 8-Ball League Association International Championships at the Bally Grand Hotel in Las Vegas display their plaques.



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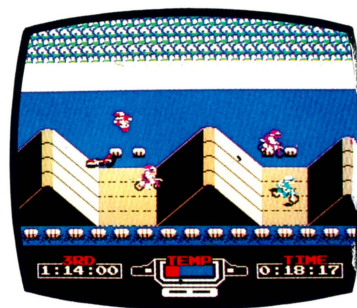
Players can look forward to new twists, new turns, new titles, and innovations such as a unique stop-action feature, skill level selection, and multiple menu selection that lets them play one game or many.

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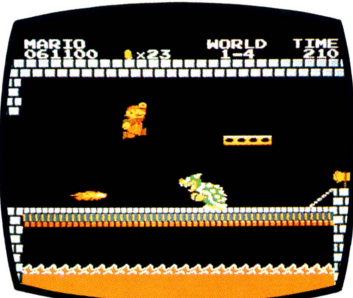


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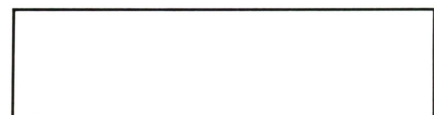
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"If the U.S. copyright law is opened for amendments relating to the convention, there is nothing to stop it from being opened for other types of amendments unrelated to the convention. There is no great effort underway to make changes in copyright law this year. The 99th Congress adjourns in early October and will not reconvene until early February 1987."

In April, AMOA counsel Roy Wolff gave Senate testimony expressing concerns of the coin-operated amusement industry about the convention. "Other industries also have concerns about joining the convention," Griffiths said, adding that the "AMOA will continue to be involved in congressional deliberations as they occur."

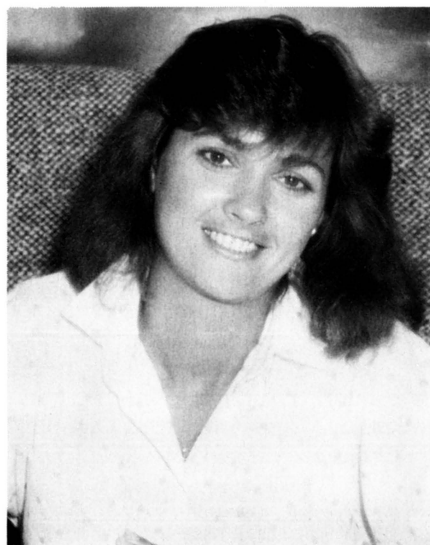
### NACA appoints Reinert

Michael Reinert, director of video operations for Rowe International's video-jukebox program, has been appointed to the associate-member advisory board of the National Association for Campus Activities (NACA).

The NACA is the nation's largest organization of campus-activities programmers, and the associate-member advisory board represents suppliers

who serve the campus-activities market.

Reinert has experience as a college-radio programmer, concert promoter, and entertainment attorney.



Susan Jarocki

### Susan Jarocki joins Data East

Susan Jarocki has joined Data East USA to work in market testing, adver-

tising, product development, and distributor sales.

Jarocki previously was with Atlas Distributing of Chicago and has experience in arcade management as well as distribution. She has relocated to California to take the new position.

### MOMA holds summer meeting

Discussions of Minnesota's law on video games of chance, parallel imports and counterfeiting, and the state of the industry highlighted the recent Minnesota Operators of Music and Amusements (MOMA) Summer Outing and Seminars.

Held at the Radisson Arrowwood Resort on Lake Darling in Alexandria, Minn., the meeting also included darts and golf tournaments, a banquet and awards ceremony, and a coin-counting contest. Tami Norberg Paulsen and Martin Kallsen were winners of the dart tournament; Rollie Beach, Jim Dubow, Rob Dubow, and Ray Hibarger were golf-tournament winners; and Rob Dubow won the coin-counting contest.

Members of the panel that discussed the state of the industry included

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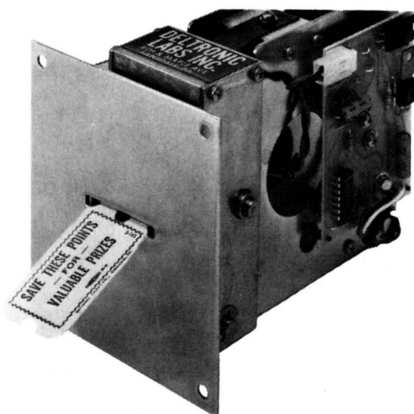
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Bernie Powers of Arachnid, Howard Smoyer of Merit Industries, Ray Hibarger of Hanson Distributing, Linda Winstead of Lieberman Music, Al Eggermont of Music Service, and Gene Winstead of Twin City Novelty. Hy Sandler, MOMA executive director, was moderator. ●

## Dynamo promotes hockey table

In an unusual demonstration at the June 25-27 Food '86 Expo in Atlantic City, a trade show for the food-and-beverage industry, a Dynamo air-cushioned hockey table was used to demonstrate "how a cushion of air can improve productivity."

The manufacturer of an air-powered conveyer belt, Simplamatic Engineering of Lynchburg, Va., hoped to benefit from the demonstration, which included an exhibition by Robert Hernandez, the current air-table-hockey national champion; Patrice Nale, current women's national champion; and Dynamo's Mark Robbins, the 1984 champion.

During the show, Hernandez, Nale, and Robbins also conducted an exhibition at the Boardwalk Mall Arcade in Wildwood, N.J.

More promotions involving Simplamatic, Dynamo, and the U.S. Air-Table-Hockey Association are being planned, according to Robbins and Bob Blair of Blair and McBrathney Advertising Agency.

The Dynamo Hockey National Championships are scheduled for September 13-14 in Boulder, Colo. For more information, call Dynamo at 1-800/527-6045 or (817) 589-7699. ●

## Seeburg conducts service schools on CD

Forty-two service technicians from the Seeburg Corporation distributor network attended factory service schools at the Holiday Inn in Rosemont, Ill., in late June and July to learn more about the company's new *LaserMusic* compact-disc phonograph.

Each of the three schools lasted four-and-a-half days and included a thorough explanation of the Sony player mechanism and the Seeburg portion of the *LaserMusic* system.

Cas Dabrowski and Jim Dziagwa of Seeburg and Erol Uckan and Al Simon of Sony conducted the sessions. ●

## ICMOA holds annual meeting

A hundred industry people gathered at Indian Lakes Resort in Bloomington, Ill., for the Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association's annual meeting in June. This year, tabletop exhibits highlighted the event, and plans were announced to have full exhibits next year.

Attendees were treated to a seminar on tournaments by Valley's Chuck Milhem, Walt Lowry of Lowry Music, Arachnid's Sam Zammutta, Howard Smoyer of Merit, and Nomac's Bill McClure; a session on cranes presented by Ed Pellegrini of Atlas and Ed Plotkin of Ace Novelty Company; and a session on parallel imports and counterfeits by Memetron's Frank Cosentino.

The association raised \$9,262.50 for

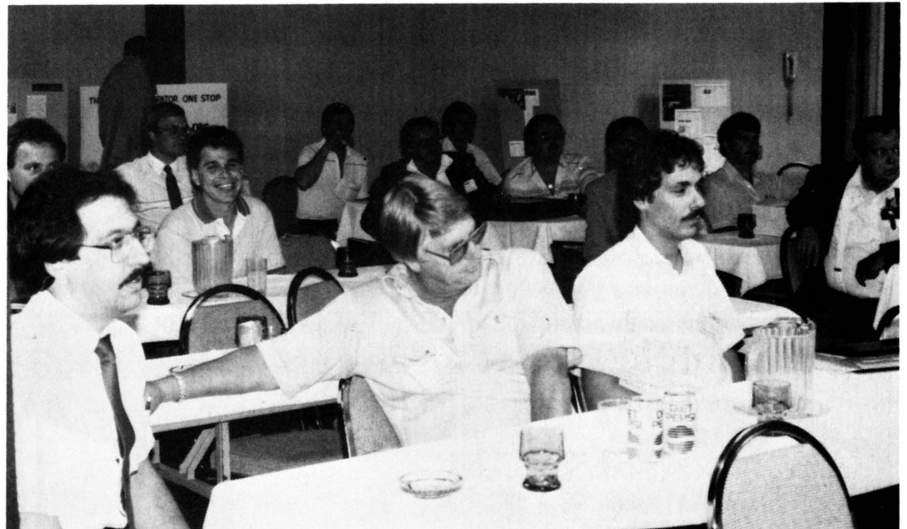
its political-action fund at an auction held after the banquet. Valley's Milhem was a sensational auctioneer for the second year in a row and may become the official auctioneer. The association presented awards to the trade magazines, and *Play Meter* was honored to be included.

The ICMOA's new officers are Paul Hoffmeister, president; Ed Veloquez, vice president; Dwain Kramzar, secretary; and Stan Williams, treasurer. ●

## Standard Vending starts weekly pool tournaments

Standard Vending and Music Company's Waco, Texas, office has begun sponsoring weekly pool tournaments.

Under the pool-tournament system,



Operators look on attentively during a seminar at the ICMOA convention.

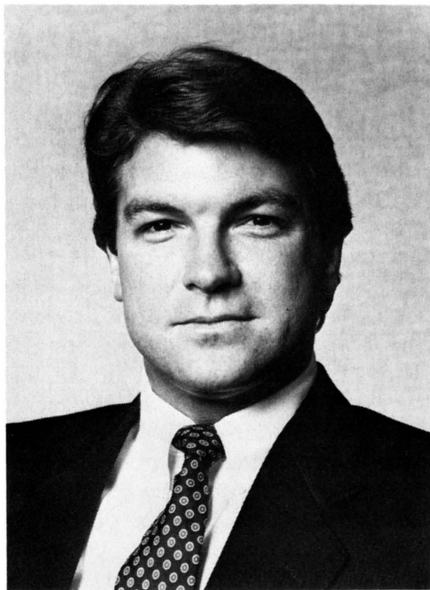


Chuck Milhem and his wife enjoy the banquet at the Illinois Coin Machine Operators Association (ICMOA) convention. Milhem, president of The Valley Company, was the auctioneer at the convention and helped raise more than \$9,000 for the ICMOA's political-action fund.



weekly tournaments are held for eight weeks, with first and second place winners each week. Those 16 players compete against each other in a tournament in the ninth week, and the top three players from that competition qualify for the annual state-association eight-ball tournament.

"This system promotes our own pool tables in our own locations," said Bob Minnick, Waco division manager for Standard Vending. "We also want to get as many participants in the AMOT (Amusement and Music Operators of Texas) annual pool tournament as we can." The AMOT tournament now coincides with the association's annual convention held in July. ●



Jolly Backer

## Backer joins Sente

Jolly Backer has joined Bally Sente, Inc., as director of national sales. He will be in Sunnyvale, Calif., and also maintain an office at the company's manufacturing facility in Franklin Park, Ill.

Backer has been in the coin-op business for five years. He began his career at Betson Pacific Distributing in Los Angeles. He then became western regional sales manager for Data East USA, and most recently held the position of regional sales director for Sega Enterprises. ●

## Witelco 5000 now bi-lingual

Williams Telephone Company's Witelco 5000 private pay phone is

now available with a bi-lingual option.

John Huddleston, national sales and marketing manager for Williams Telephone Co., said, "Now, with our exclusive bi-lingual option, we can really customize a phone to a location's particular needs." Huddleston added that the company "plans to offer other languages as demands in the marketplace increase."

Witelco uses advanced memory-compression technology to put vocabulary of both languages in the phone. A retrofit kit is available to convert Witelco 5000 phones that speak only English. ●

## Promotion ties in Grand Lizard, Toronto Zoo

Video Invasion of Toronto, Canada, tied Williams' *Grand Lizard* pinball in with the Metro Toronto Zoo in a June promotion at two Video Invasion arcade locations.

The seven high scorers on *Grand Lizard* each week of the month received passes to visit the lizards and 4,000 other animals at the 700-acre zoo.

The contest was open to all participants at the two arcades, and, in addition to the zoo passes, the two top scorers each week received Video Invasion T-shirts.

Also as part of the promotion, Video Invasion T-shirts were given players for one cent with the purchase of a \$10 roll of tokens. According to

Wayne Fromm, Video Invasion president, the arcades' 144-shirt supply was exhausted in two weeks. ●

## Sega appoints Hill

Sega Enterprises, Inc., has appointed John Hill regional sales manager.

Hill will be based in Atlanta and will be responsible for the entire eastern region. He has 20 years of sales experience in the coin-machine industry. ●

## Mountain Coin holds open house

Mountain Coin Machine Distributors of Denver welcomed 64 operators and factory representatives to its July 26 open house and outdoor cook-out.

While viewing new products, attendees were eligible to win door prizes, including a Seeburg *LaserMusic* compact-disc phonograph, game kits, three microwave ovens, parts credits, and umbrellas, all donated by manufacturers and Mountain Coin.

Mountain Coin also introduced its new sales representative, Larry Mauro, at the open house.

Among the factory representatives there were: Bob Breither of Seeburg, Steve Palmer of Automatic Products, Lenore Sayers of Sega, Brian Duke of Nintendo, John Barone of Data East, Mark Struhs of Dynamo, Russ Strahan of NSM, Jay Wood of Ardac, John Taylor of Vendo, and Tom Siemieniec of Cinematronics. ●



First-week winners in Video Invasion's *Grand Lizard* contest and Wayne Fromm (third from right), Video Invasion president, flash their awards—passes to the Metro Toronto Zoo. To the right of Fromm is one of the promotional signs for the contest.

# Quiz games no trivial pursuit

By Mike Shaw

Whether or not the rumor that the first coin-operated trivia game was created by one of Al Capone's drivers is true, that first rotating wheel of questions and answers was the prototype of a game concept that has survived several decades and six or seven generations of expression.

Mechanical games, film-projection pieces, videos—each successive version may offer advancements on the features of its predecessor. Still, every trivia game is based on a single principle: people enjoy challenging their memories and pitting their knowledge on a variety of topics against others.

The latest generation of coin-op quiz-game madness started with the summer 1983 introduction of *FAX* by Sunnyvale, Calif.-based Exidy, Inc. Maybe Pete Kauffman, Exidy president, built a trivia game only because "nobody else was doing it," but the decision triggered one of the dominant industry concepts of the mid-'80s.

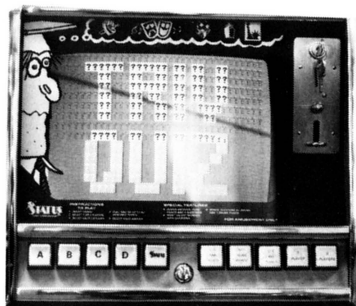
## Operating considerations

Operators turned to trivia games as part of their strategy to curtail investment in youth-oriented pieces and concentrate on adult locations and the games adults play. Kauffman might have been slightly ahead of his time with *FAX*, but others who entered the market about a year later found tremendous acceptance of their models. Status Games commonly is given credit for ushering in the new trivia era with *Triv-Quiz*, which bowed in late 1984. It set the trend for successes to follow from manufacturers like Merit Industries, Grayhound, and Kramer by presenting trivia in a countertop model and by periodically furnishing update kits with new questions. Those two factors came to be the most important considerations for operators buying trivia games.

One manufacturer said that 75 percent of his trivia-game sales have been countertop models, the rest, kits



Exidy's *FAX*



Status Games' *Triv-Quiz*

for converting upright video games.

"This time around the trivia game has served as a conversation piece as well as a mental challenge," said Mike Yaffa, vice president of sales at Status. "We consistently see people gathering around the games and talking with each other as they play. It's a way people are using to enjoy each other's company in bars. It's also serving as a way for people in bars to meet each other."

Most important of all in operating trivia games, manufacturers and operators agree, is keeping the games fresh with new questions.

"We suggest that operators

change out questions and categories every three months to keep their trivia games earning at their peaks," said David Katz of M. Kramer Manufacturing, marketers of the highly successful *LA Trivia Challenge* and more recently, *Trivia Madness*.

"Keeping questions current is undoubtedly the most important factor in operating the games," agreed Peter Feuer, president of Merit Industries, the manufacturer of *Trivia Whiz* and other trivia-themed games.

Feuer explained that operators can take several approaches to keeping questions current. Not only can they purchase replacement kits designed to update the games, but they can shift questions from game to game and location to location.

"Most trivia operators own lots of the games," he pointed out. "They monitor their machines by keeping track of how high the percentage of correct answers gets. When the percentage is too high, they know it's time to change questions. They can shift question software from game to game. That's a very inexpensive way to keep a lot of games fresh."

Keeping questions fresh starts with having a lot of questions to offer. Perhaps that is the area in which the new games have made the most significant advancements over previous models.

"Technology has gotten to the point where you have the capability of storing a tremendous amount of questions," Feuer said. Merit's *Trivia Whiz IV*, for example, offers 10,000 questions.

Operators also can keep trivia-game earnings high by offering different categories of questions and, perhaps more importantly, most manufacturers are bringing the games to market as part of game "systems" designed to be updated regularly by changing out a board or even a chip or two. M. Kramer's *Trivia Madness*, for



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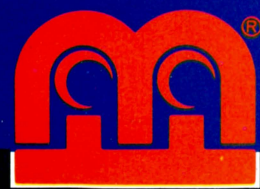
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example, offers chip sets for 31 different categories of 2,000 questions each.

Additionally, game makers have been bringing out coin-op quiz games in a variety of focus topics. Several manufacturers offer sex-trivia games, and a couple have had success with music trivias.

Operators who commonly purchase countertop games know that the size of the game is always an important consideration. The case is no different with trivia.

"Too big is scary," Katz said, noting the reluctance of bar owners to surrender too much bar space to a countertop machine.

Sharp trivia operators also concern themselves with the quality of entertainment of the games or software changes they buy. Above all, the games should be fun, Feuer said.

"Trivia games should offer a combination of a test of knowledge and entertainment," he said. "There should be fun in the game play, the look of the game, and in the questions themselves. One of the reasons our games have been successful is that people playing them have a good time. People laugh when they play our games."

### Slowdown

Manufacturers agree that 1985 was the year of trivia. Sales of new trivia games have slowed considerably in the past six months. Nevertheless, they also report sales of some games are still brisk and demand for replacement, update, and conversion kits is still high.

"We have seen the market taper off," Feuer said. "Not that sales aren't still strong, but they aren't like they were during the peak period of about a year ago."

"Most of our trivia sales are update kits, now," added Katz, noting that Kramer was promoting its new card game, *Kramer Casino*, as replacement software for its trivia games.

In light of the market turn here, some U.S. trivia manufacturers have turned their attentions to the United Kingdom, where trivia games are used in payout form as SWP (skill with prizes) machines. In the U.K., much of the coin-game industry is dominated by payout slot machines classified as AWP (amusement with prizes) machines. But the games are government-regulated as to how many such machines can be placed in each location and how much money each win can award. SWP-categorized machines



such as trivia games are far less restricted and, therefore, far more profitable to operate.

In spite of the slowdown, most trivia manufacturers aren't backing away from the games. They continue to market new quiz-game ideas and support their existing machines with update chips containing new questions and with new trivia ideas in the form of conversions.

"In fact," Katz pointed out, "you're likely to see another nationally known company putting its name on a new trivia game soon, in much the same way Anheuser-Busch did with *LA Trivia Challenge*."

It is likely that new quiz-themed games will continue to emerge. Much like other adult-themed games, such as poker, quiz games never seem to wear thin.

"There will always be people in the playing public," Feuer said, "that like to exercise their minds without risking their egos."

### The games

The following is a list of the most popular of the current generation of trivia games. Games are listed according to company, alphabetically.

#### Bally Sente

**Trivial Pursuit**—Translates the popular board game into a coin-operated video game, but, unlike the board game, players (one to four) select answers from possible choices. Players attempt to land on four corner squares and answer resulting "Think Tank" questions correctly.

#### Grayhound Electronics

**Video Trivia**—Players wager points on questions selected from several categories. The game does not show correct answers when wrong answers are given. It is designed for convertibility.

#### Konami

**Wizz Quiz**—This game enables two players to answer the same question in head-to-head competition and work against the clock. Graphics feature animated wizards who are crowned with dunce caps for incorrect answers. It converts *Track & Field* PCBs and offers questions in five categories.

#### M. Kramer Manufacturing

**LA Trivia Challenge**—Via an arrangement with Anheuser-Bush and the New American Library (a trivia-question publishing company), this game was the recipient of plenty of promotion and lots of trivia expertise. Questions can be changed out by replacing the EPROM. Game ameni-

ties include an accounting system that lets an operator monitor the number of plays in each trivia category.

**Trivia Madness**—Each game comes with five categories and 2,000 questions in each category. Altogether, there are 31 categories available as chip replacements. The game is available in upright, countertop, cocktail, and conversion-kit versions.

#### Merit

**Trivia Whiz**—This game takes a variety approach with plenty of updates available with questions on sports, entertainment and music, and a special true-false segment containing several fields of questions. It is available in all game-cabinet styles, including cocktail.

**Phraze Craze**—This game tests players' knowledge of popular phrases. The special conversion *Sex Phraze* includes operator-selectable XXX-rated phrases. The game offers an attract mode to draw players.

**Tic Tac Trivia**—A trivia-strategy game for one or two players, this game has a 10,000-question set divided into categories of sports, entertainment, general interest, rock and roll, sex trivia, strange-but-true, and others. It is available as a nine- or 13-inch countertop, upright, cabaret, cocktail, or kit.

#### PGD

**Progressive Music Trivia**—Available only as a kit to convert horizontal or vertical uprights or cocktail tables, this trivia game plays music and offers written trivia questions.

#### SMS Manufacturing

**Trivia Hang-Up**—This upright encourages players to challenge each other's knowledge of movies and TV, sports, music, and a category called "Anything goes" with a "steal feature" that allows one player to steal points from his opponent by answering questions correctly that the opponent has answered incorrectly.

#### Status Games

**Triv-Quiz**—This is a countertop introduced as a game system that promises easy updating through conversions. Players build point totals by wagering on questions before answers appear, then correctly answering the questions.

**Baby Boom Challenge**—Announced as an expansion of the "Status System Library," this game enrolls players in Baby Boom University as they work their way through a maze toward graduation by answering questions, correcting spelling, and defining words. It is available in all game-cabinet forms. ●

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# COINMAN INTERVIEW



## Maury Ferchen

by Valerie Cognevich

*Maurice "Maury" Ferchen, president of Bally's Coin-Op division, began his industry career in September 1983 when he joined Bally as president of its Aladdin's Castle, Inc., subsidiary. He had spent the previous 20 years with Montgomery Ward, and his retailing background certainly has helped him in the coin-op industry.*

*In April 1985 he was named president of Bally Midway and with the recent formation of the Coin-Op division advanced to his current position.*

*Ferchen also recently was elected president of the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA), and said that one of his goals during his tenure is to strengthen the lines of communication among all segments of the industry.*

---

**Would you briefly explain Bally Corporation's structure?**

"Bally Manufacturing owns health and fitness clubs across the United States, Six Flags Amusement Parks, casino businesses, and fitness products and handles lotteries through a company called Scientific Games. Our division is called Bally Coin-Op and is composed of Midway Manufacturing, Bally Sente, Bally Aladdin's Castle, and our one distribution office in Phoenix. I answer directly to Bally Manufacturing Chief Operating Officer Roger Keesee, who is in charge of all of Bally's divisions and answers to Bob Mullane, president and chairman of the entire Bally Manufacturing network."

**How is the Aladdin's Castle division doing?**

"We are very happy with the division. It's doing very well. As you know, we have closed quite a few stores. We were at 456 stores at the peak and now operate slightly over 300 stores. We closed stores that were in strip malls, downtown, college locations that were free-standing stores, and stores in malls with vacancy problems. We are basically in malls that are larger and more substantial; that is the direction we will be heading in the future. As to how they are doing saleswise, we think we are doing well. We always would like more sales, but the stores we have are structured well and have excellent management in the locations. We are very happy with the stores."

**After closing the stores, have you done anything different with the ones remaining?**

"We are promoting the stores heavily with birthday parties and many other promotions with restaurants and fast-food places, pizza restaurants, anything to get people in. We are happy about the way our managers are

● ***I think we can do much more in communicating with each other. The more we talk to each other and the more we share information, the better this industry will be.*** ●

handling the promotions. We have developed a significant portion of our business from these promotions. Besides that, it makes it a fun place to be. There is a family atmosphere, and that is really what we want.”

***What do you think was the major mistake made by those who opened arcades during the video boom?***

“During the peak of the business—and I am not just talking about the people who aren’t open now—we all made the same mistake. We just expanded at a tremendous rate that was too rapid to control. When you do that you tend to get into locations that you really shouldn’t be in. Location certainly is important to any arcade. You have to be where there is a lot of traffic. You need a lot of foot traffic going past the arcade. During the peak there were a lot of free-standing and strip-center locations that didn’t have enough traffic to justify the location.”

***What prompted Bally’s decision to leave the distributing end of the business?***

“We decided to get out of the distribution business because our thought was that there are many very substantial independent distributors that could handle the product from Midway and Sente in a very efficient and effective manner—distributors such as C.A. Robinson, Shaffer, Brady, Betson, Leiberman, Laniel, and many others that we think are excellent distributors and can do the job for us. We saw no need for us to be in that business. It has been proven in the past, and we have had the same feeling, that distribution run by a corporate structure is very difficult to handle properly. It is much more of a ‘hands-on’ business that the independent distributors have today. They are there talking to operators, they are supplying the service and credit for the operators. They really know the people on a first-hand basis. That is something you lose when you run distribution centers from a corporate headquarters.”

***When Bally decided to get into distributing, did it seem that the corporate structure would work?***

“I can’t really answer that because that was prior to my joining the company. At the peak we had 23 distribution centers across the U.S. Today we have one in Phoenix that we are going to keep. It is an excellent location with a wonderful manager in Sal DeBruno. We have a good sales situation. We are basically keeping Phoenix in order to keep our pulse in the business.”

***Does the used equipment from Aladdin’s Castles locations go through that distributorship?***

“No. We haven’t at this point, and I have no inten-

tion of doing that.”

***How do you see the role of the distributor in the industry?***

“The distributor is the direct link between manufacturers and operators. I think the key issue is that the distributors really supply all the service, parts, knowledge, training, sessions—everything the operator really needs to be successful with the equipment that comes from the manufacturers. They are an integral link serving a need that manufacturers can’t serve nearly as well.”

***Are you confident that a distributor can represent your product fairly although he may represent nearly all manufacturing lines?***

“I think any manufacturer would tell you that they would rather have distributors sell nothing but their particular products, but that isn’t the real world. I think all the distributors are doing a fine job servicing many products. We have no problems with that. Of course, having good product is the key. It’s what keeps the distributor healthy, which is important to all of us.”

***When kits were first being introduced, Bally was adamantly opposed to them for various reasons, some which were proven right. But kits are a vital part of the industry now. How does Bally feel about them now?***

“There is a market for kits that go into dedicated cabinets, but there seem to be many, many kits on the market. I’m not opposed to manufacturing kits here, and I think when the time is right we may do that. But today we are certainly dedicated to the Sente system and interested in dedicated games from Midway. I feel the dedicated game is doing very well, as you have seen from some recent ones. If it is a quality product, there is definitely a market. What I’m saying is there is a need for different things in the market. Operators don’t just need kits, or just need dedicated games, they need a variety to keep their businesses strong.”

***Is there a trend toward manufacturers making more dedicated games?***

“I think when a company has a game that earns like some of the dedicated games being introduced lately, it shows the need for that type of equipment. We are very excited about our new dedicated piece, *Rampage*. It has a good acceptance and is earning exceptionally well. It also proves that if you have a good product, the distributor and operator will buy a dedicated game. Mediocre games or games that are a five on a scale of one

*(continued on next page)*



to ten will have difficulty making it in a dedicated market. If I put my operating hat on, I would buy games that earn, and that's what makes the business go round. It also makes the manufacturers work hard to put out quality product."

***What process goes into introducing a game that you hope will be a winner?***

"If we were all experts on that, there would be no bad games. But we do a very thorough job of testing and let the end user determine what rank a game should be. You must have a feel for the market and know what age group you're trying to appeal to and what really turns them on and what excites them. We test our games both in Aladdin's Castles and with our distributors and with some outside locations not associated with Bally. We like to test at least three weeks, sometimes a maximum of six weeks."

***How many games are tested but not produced?***

"It happens, but not too often. It's difficult, because once a game gets to the testing stage, we have already done most of the preliminary work and are confident the game will do well. There are exceptions, but not often."

***Who can get a copy of the test results?***

"Anyone can get the test-result information. We make a lot of adjustments and corrections when the first game goes out. We use the test period to make the game as perfect as we can make it."

***Why has Bally decided to develop games in-house and not license games from the Japanese, as many other companies are doing?***

"That decision was made prior to my being a part of Midway. But though the decision was made to have in-house development, we will always look at things to license. If something exceptional comes along, we could license a game. We have an exciting group of develop-

"The pinball market is stronger today than it has been in the last several years. I think there is an entirely new generation of people and age groups playing pinball than five years ago. As you've seen with all the pinball product, there are more exciting features on the playfield, more exciting types of games. The games being produced are attracting a new, younger cult. This in my opinion is what has increased pinball business. We have a new pinball called *Black Belt* and a steady line of pinballs to follow. We have regrouped our pinball department and have some exciting new designers. We look forward to some steady growth in that market."

***How has Bally's approach to manufacturing changed?***

"I think we have made a lot of changes from the video-boom days. Our approach to manufacturing today and the market the way it is in video and pinball is to run it like any other business. In the boom days the sales were such that you could almost do anything in manufacturing and have overruns of games produced and still come out very well. In today's market we have structured a lean and mean type of operation that is geared to make a run close to what we anticipate the market is going to be. It is a much more controlled business today than during the boom days because the volume is much different. Manufacturing changes all the time. We are looking to upgrade our quality and just trying to do it in a more businesslike manner."

***What do you feel was the most significant thing the industry learned from the video boom?***

"Anyone in the business today definitely learned a lesson. I know we have. I think we have to be very careful that expenses are controlled and businesses run like any other business. Businesses expanded during the boom days at such a rate that it was impossible to control. In today's market, obviously, the credit policies are much more important. I think everyone learned from it and are

*"Mediocre games ... will have difficulty making it in a dedicated market. If I put my operating hat on, I would buy games that earn, and that's what makes the business go round. It also makes the manufacturers work hard to put out quality product."*

ment people here at Midway. We do all our own R&D today and think there are advantages because you can keep on top of product and know what is coming. With licensing there is a constant battle to get the best games. It is much more difficult today to license a game than several years ago, because many of the Japanese companies have companies in the U.S. today. So picking a winner is a lot more difficult. So we feel very comfortable with our development group. One of the rewards is a game such as *Rampage*. It was strictly developed here at Midway, and it can go up against any of the licensed games."

***Bally is famous for its pinball games. Is that market strong again?***

running their businesses accordingly."

***How is the coin-op entertainment business doing as it competes with other forms of entertainment?***

"I have always thought we directly compete with the movie and record industry. It seems when there is a hit movie or two or three in a row, or a hit song, the dollars shift in that direction. For example, Michael Jackson changed the record industry. It went down for about five years and all of a sudden it was booming back. I think the important thing we have to do in this business is constantly be innovative and never be satisfied with what we are doing. We're in a business that if we aren't changing every day, we are not going in the right direction. We must come up with games that are so exciting

that players would rather play a video or pin than spend that same money on a movie or music. As long as we keep our business exciting and changing, we can compete very well."

***Do you feel the industry should and could do more in promotion?***

"That is one of my concerns in the AAMA. I think we can do much more in communicating with each other. The more we talk to each other and the more we share information, the better this industry will be. It is very difficult to advertise our type of business on TV stations, on the radio, etc. simply because it is prohibitive because of major expenses involved. We must constantly keep our product exciting so that word of mouth will get

association. If we share our concerns and needs in the industry, we will see a much stronger industry, and that is what I hope to bring to the game. Another reason I think we will do so well with AAMA is our new executive vice president, David Weaver. He really runs the show day in and day out and is doing an outstanding job. Also, the addition of Bob Fay, who has the FBI background, will greatly add to the association's effectiveness and strength.

***Explain exactly what the parallel problem is.***

"It is the unlawful importation and distribution of products, in this case amusement games or components, legally manufactured abroad but shipped into the U.S. in violation of exclusive distribution agreements

*"We don't need to look just for the one saving thing for the industry or the one boom period. If we just go on with the controlled growth and constantly come up with exciting product, the next few years will be very good for this industry."*

around that it is the fun thing to do."

***Do you think there is any technological boost forthcoming like some blockbuster innovation?***

"I hope so! [But] I don't think the industry can run solely on the assumption something is coming along. As long as we keep changing, a blockbuster innovation may just come along. But I don't know if anyone knows what it will be. We'll find out when our customers tell us."

***Do you agree that the industry seems to be on an upswing?***

"I do. It started leveling off in July/August 1985 and seemingly has been on a nice controlled steady growth since. I think the industry is on an upswing. The manufacturers, distributors, and operators are all much smarter business people. I think it will continue in that direction. What we are all looking for is some real steady growth."

***You have just been named the new AAMA president. What are some of the association's accomplishments, and what do you hope it will accomplish during your term as president?***

"Since the beginning of AAMA with Joe Robbins and Bob Lloyd the association has accomplished many things. In the last year Bob began fighting parallel imports and counterfeit boards. They did such an outstanding job that I see my position as keeping the trend going in that direction. We still have a major problem with parallel boards. I will try to get everyone closer and make sure we all understand each other's problems. When I talk to distributors, I realize the problems distributors and manufacturers have are common problems. Same with operators. We are in the operating business, so I understand how operators think and their concerns. We will try to get very close to AMOA and have joint sessions with them. We will be working with JAMMA [the Japanese counterpart of the AAMA] and trying to get closer to that

and/or copyrights held by the legitimate U.S. importers of these games or components."

***Do you think there is a chance that the parallel imports and copied boards could substantially reduce the amount manufacturers spend on game development?***

"I don't think it will reduce the amount a manufacturer spends on his own development. It's not going to reduce ours, and in talking to others I don't think it will reduce their in-house development. Because of the relationship of the yen to the dollar today, we are seeing a trend of less parallel boards and more counterfeit boards coming in. So although the parallel board problem is still there, it is changing to more counterfeit boards."

***Aside from parallel imports and counterfeit boards, what other problems is the industry facing?***

"I will just go back to my earlier comments that we must continue to manage the control of growth in the business. We've all learned our lessons. One of our problems on a continuing basis is to communicate what kind of product is available and what the earnings are. We often don't communicate that properly so the operators are aware of what's coming out and what the earnings are or what the return on investment could be on a piece, etc. That is something we must do."

***What do you see in the industry's short-term future?***

"The long-term future relates to the short term. Product, of course, is very important in that we never get to be fat cats again but are constantly looking for new ideas. We don't need to look just for the one saving thing for the industry or the one boom period. If we just go on with the controlled growth and constantly come up with exciting product, the next few years will be very good for this industry."



# Bookkeeping features key game adjustments

by John R. Storbeck

To some, St. Paul, Minn., operator Todd Erickson would seem a magician. He can take games that everybody else has given up on, and make them work at a profit. He likes to tell the story, for example, of a *Split Second* game he bought used. By the time he got it, he said, it had been cannibalized for the memory chips. Nobody had ever reached the second replay level or beaten the high score to date. The machine had been paying out somewhere around 12 percent, of which 10 percent was match. The previous owner, who "had been in the business for 20 or 30 years," thought the machine was a "dog."

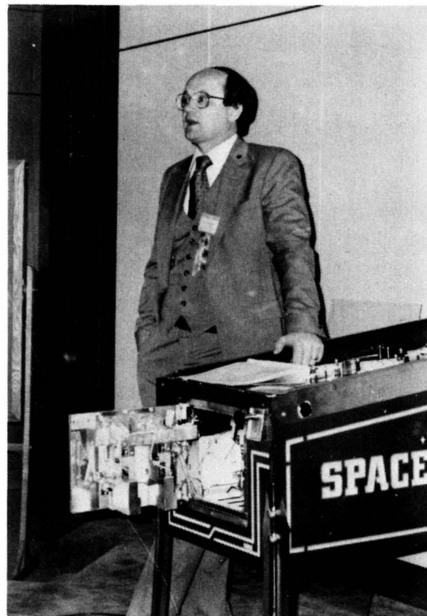
Erickson thought otherwise. He put the game back on location, and, sure enough, it earned more than \$100 a week and was, he said, "always my number-one or number-two game."

Or take another game, *Food Fight*, that wasn't highly rated when he bought it several years ago "on close-out." After Erickson placed it on his route, it became his "number-one game in each location for two to four weeks," and was beating even his sit-down *Pole Position*. The game, he said, was "very strong for quite a while" afterward.

What's his secret? What sleight of hand, what incantation does he use to turn dogs into pedigreed prize-winners?

No secrets, Erickson would say. No sleight of hand or charms. He would sum up his magic in two words: game adjustments. With *Split Second*, he reprogrammed the game so the player could win a "good, solid 30 percent." With *Food Fight*: "I adjusted it so it was a two-and-a-half, three-minute game."

Game adjustments. Erickson believes in them. He estimates that operators can increase their revenues by from 30 to 40 percent by keeping their games properly adjusted. But



Todd Erickson

some people, he said, "don't realize the importance of it." They pass judgment too quickly. A year ago, an operator asked to buy one of Erickson's *Food Fights*, "for the cabinet." Erickson said no, the machine was still good. When the operator disagreed, Erickson replied, "Why don't we look at the meter: the cash box is always right." When they opened the game, it wasn't Erickson who was surprised to find nearly 35,000 plays recorded in the machine. Erickson recalled, "He said to me, 'Geez, I didn't think it was that good.'"

The fact of the matter is that many operators are not aware of all the bookkeeping features that are available in their machines or, more important, how to use them in making adjustments. Mary Fujihara, director of marketing research for Atari Games, described it this way: "It's not the majority of operators who use this data—it's a small minority, still." Things, however, seem to be changing.

"It used to be," Fujihara said, "practically anything you placed into a location earned money." But after 1982, she continued, "the whole industry became more competitive. You had to really work at drawing players into the location and keeping them there." With the market saturated and players "inundated with product," she said, operators have had to respond by paying more attention to option settings and accounting data.

Fujihara made another point: "Players in the heyday of the industry [were] much more willing to pump in \$20 to learn how to play a game through the initial few weeks." Now, she said, if a game is too difficult or too confusing, "they may walk away, and you may lose them forever."

Perhaps most important is the "growing diversification of players across the country." No longer, said Fujihara, are there universal option settings that are appropriate "for any type of location, for every type of player."

What, then, is available to the operator, and how can he use that information to "tailor his game," as Fujihara put it, to a specific clientel?

All games today have some kind of bookkeeping package, although it varies from game to game. The whole premise of bookkeeping, Fujihara said, is to give an operator the information he needs to determine the optimum settings for a specific location. Put another way, it gives an operator an "analytical poll" he can use to find out whether his players are getting the best "game-play value."

Typically, a bookkeeping package records coin-accounting information such as the number of coins dropped. Alex McKay, director of research and development at Cinematronics, explained that Cinemat-system games take the coinmeter concept a step farther: in addition to a lifetime coun-

ter, Cinemat games have a period counter, which enables an operator to look at how a game did in a specific length of time, over a weekend, for example. Another feature of the Cinemat system is the coin multiplier, which translates data like a number of tokens into dollars.

The bookkeeping packages in most, if not all, games also record game characteristics, such as the number of one- and two-player games. If a machine has third- and fourth-player capabilities, bookkeeping will account for the number of three- and four-player games. Some machines—like those in the Cinemat system—may tell how many games the player has won against the computer, and vice versa. Atari packages also record the total number of games played.

Fujihara explained a feature of Atari's coin-accounting package she calls a "key statistic" in evaluating a game's success. The feature enables operators to calculate the percentage of time the game is in play against the time the game is powered on. If an arcade game, for example, is turned on 12 hours a day and is being played 10, interest is obviously high. "If it's only being played three hours out of 12," Fujihara said, "you can tell it's not even getting first-time play."

One of the newest—and certainly one of the most useful—features to find its way into bookkeeping packages is the histogram. Bally Sente uses histograms to show things like game time, game level, and game scores. Cinematronics uses similar displays (it calls them game-duration graphs) for game time. Atari, however, was the first to incorporate such a feature in its



Mary Fujihara

accounting package, and it is considered by some—Todd Erickson among them—to be the leader in the field.

Simply put, a histogram is a form of time analysis. "It's a chart," Fujihara said, "that represents a frequency distribution, and on our games that distribution equates to game times per coin." In other words, it shows the operator the distribution of times he's getting for his players on a given setting—how many players under a minute, how many over three minutes, how many over five, and so forth. On some Atari games, the histogram may have a range that stretches over nine minutes in increments of 30 seconds. Atari uses bar charts for that purpose

in some of its games—as do Bally Sente and Cinematronics. Bally's Rich Adam said that is the "easiest way of displaying the data." He called it "instant visual feedback as to what your statistics look like." In other of its games, Atari simply uses numbers—like 0-30 seconds—and flashes how many players clocked in for the duration of play.

Ideally, the graphed data should resemble a bell-shaped curve, "with a peak distribution," Fujihara said, "around two to three minutes." Erickson feels that this is one of the most valuable tools a video operator can use to determine how his machine should be set. When he put *Peter Pack Rat* on location, he said, "it was considered a very marginal game." After a few adjustments based on what the histogram showed him, "that game beat my *Hang-On*," he said, "for the first twelve weeks." *Hang-On*, he said, was first or second on the game charts at the time.

All manufacturers send their games out with recommended settings. At the same time, however, all are aware of the problem of demographics—player preferences and player skills vary from place to place and region to region. Ed Rotberg of Bally Sente said the company's machines leave the factory at "what we consider the moderate level," which is "usually somewhere just above the easier levels." McKay said Cinematronics sets the games "for what we found to be the best-earning numbers on test." Fujihara used the term "medium" to describe Atari's factory specs. All; however, try to give the operator enough room above and below the

Histogram for level 4

High score for level: 808192

Press 2 PLAYER START  
to clear all histograms

Press 1 PLAYER START  
for next screen

Aux coins:	0
Left coins:	1310
Right coins:	68
1plyr Games:	1170
2plyr Games:	94
Mins played:	3466
Mins pur up:	5357
Aux. cntr 1:	7
Aux. cntr 2:	667
Aux. cntr 3:	247
Error count:	2

Avg. Game Time: 153 seconds.

Press 2 PLAYER START  
to clear statistics

Press 1 PLAYER START  
for Histograms

Among bookkeeping information screens included in Atari System I games and most other Atari games are a coin-accounting screen (left) and a game-time histogram that shows the number of games played in various increments of time ranging from less than a minute to nine minutes (540 seconds) or longer.

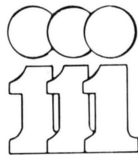


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setting so that he can adjust the machine to suit his location.

Erickson, who said there's "no one right answer on how to operate games," is nevertheless outspoken about what works for him. "number one—my cardinal rule—if it's my number-one game, I don't touch it. I don't care what it's doing." Although he suggests running new games a week or two, and then analyzing the data, he believes in running them much tighter, "especially with a super game like *High Speed*." Erickson's rationale is that "if it's so good that they're going to stand in line [to play it], there's no sense in paying out 30 to 40 percent. You might as well run it at a lower percentage until that newness factor wears out."

It's at this juncture that Erickson parts ways with some of the manufacturers. Whereas many game-makers will advise tightening up on games as they get older, Erickson's street sense and his philosophy of the business sometimes take him in the other direction. Quick to point out that the industry is an "entertainment industry," he stressed the importance of giving the player "a fair return for his money." Every game has a life cycle. In some instances, Erickson said, he can adjust the game, get his income up, and give a "bigger bang for a quarter" than can many of his competitors.

Erickson has his own ideas about what kinds of changes game-makers could incorporate to help make the industry healthier. Many have to do with standardization of non-game features. But he reserves high praise for Williams Electronics. Williams is "making the games easier to operate," he said. "The term I like is one that Williams has copyrighted—'user-friendly pinball.'" Headed by Steven Kordek, whose 50 years in pinball design lend credibility to his assessment "I know pin games," the design department at Williams has come up with a game that adjusts itself. But Erickson likes it for another reason, too: he can still put his two cents in. "I can set it automatically," he said, "to adjust itself every 1,000, 2,000, 3,000 plays. I can set what I want, and the machine will do it itself."

Until the rest of the industry catches up with Williams, however, operators must, as Erickson put it, "utilize what we have."

In the meantime, will using book-keeping data and game adjustments extend the life of machines on location now? Erickson's reply was, "Drastically. I got a game called *Bubbles*..." •

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# Computerizing calls for caution

by Jeffrey Rosenthal

If you've ever wondered how to keep up with an endless amount of paperwork or if a computer could make your job and your life easier, here's some advice on what to look for and what you should know about computerizing your business.

To begin with, there are three basic computer-operating systems. The standard created by IBM is PC-DOS or MS-DOS. The standard created by Digital Computers is CP/M. The standard created by AT&T is UNIX. These are the main operating systems for personal computers. Atari and Commodore have their own operating systems, and many feel the two have isolated themselves as a result. Recently, however, both have come out with "IBM-compatible" models. It should be noted that compatible does not necessarily mean 100-percent compatible. If you buy an "IBM-compatible" computer, you may not be able to run all the software made for IBM computers.

I know the question: What is software? Software is another name for a computer program, which is simply a set of instructions that tell the computer what questions to ask, which mathematical calculations to perform.

Before you run out and buy a computer based upon an advertisement, decide what tasks you expect the computer to help you with. Your list of tasks may include:

- word processing
- payroll
- accounts payable
- accounts receivable
- bookkeeping/data base/spreadsheets
- playing games
- general ledger
- inventory

This is the most important piece of advice you can follow: Go to a computer dealer (like the nationwide chain of Software City, some Sears stores, Computer Age, or Computerland) and get a hands-on demonstration of software, *not* any specific computer.

If you can compare two similar programs, check out the ease with which the on-screen instructions guide you through the program. This program is said to be "menu-driven." If the on-screen instructions, called screen prompts, are very good, and self-explanatory, the program is said to be "user-friendly" (you are the user).

Think of the process this way: You would not think of buying a suit simply because it looks good without trying the suit on to see if it fits.

After your hands-on demonstration, if you feel relatively comfortable with the program, establish which computer can run (operate) the program.

Then examine the next category of software following the same procedure, and again find out which computers will be able to run the software you choose. Continue the procedure for each kind of task you want your computer to be able to handle.

When you've finished, compare your list of software programs with the computers that will run them. You want to purchase the computer that can run all the software on your list.

When you've decided which computer system and software to get, it's time for a crucial step—selecting a dealer. Long after your purchase of the system and software, you will need the support that only a dedicated professional dealer will provide. You'll need a dealer who will answer your how-to questions, give you advice on solving your application problems, and be your source for technical knowledge, equipment repairs, and supplies or new products. You won't fully appreciate a full-service dealer until you find out the hard way that you don't have one.

Any idiot can sell you something. Only a knowledgeable professional will be able to answer your daily operational questions.

Now that you have your dealer, your computer, and your software, you are ready to plug in your system. Here you would be well advised to

read the general operating manual for your computer.

Find out what packing materials to remove from your system, then turn it on. If your computer has a hard disk, some programs will already be in the computer's memory. If not, you will have to insert a data disk containing the operating system and the program.

Never use a master program disk for anything except to make a working copy of your program. If you have a CP/M operating system, the command to copy something usually is PIP (although a program called copy also is important, particularly to install the operating system on your working copy of a program). If your operating system is MS-DOS, the command is "copy."

On screen the commands would look like this:

CP/M

A >PIP B:=A:\*. \* <RETURN>  
or A >COPY <RETURN>

MS-DOS

A >COPY A:=B:\*. \* <RETURN>

You'll see on your keyboard a button marked RETURN or ENTER. Both keys do the same thing. When you see <RETURN>, it means to press the return button. *Do not type the word return.*

Then, by reading the manual that came with the software, find out how to call the program up to the screen. A program name cannot include more than 10 characters—seven characters followed by a period and three more characters, which are called an extension. Many programs have two-letter names. For example, a word processing program called Word Star by Micro Pro has the computer name WS. You would call up this program as follows: A >WS <RETURN> .

Your computer will do the rest by reading or loading the program. On-screen instructions will tell you what to do next. Most software comes with a tutorial or a sample program with a "text" file telling you in English what to do. The best way to learn how to use a

program is to go in and play with the sample data. That is what it is there for. Go ahead and learn by doing, making mistakes and discovering how to fix your mistakes.

### Business programs

Usually the previously discussed rules apply, but you really must experiment with the program first. To do so, follow all of the rules such as duplicating your master disks.

Only after you are confident that you know how a program works are you ready to use your company data. If your data includes massive lists of names and addresses (like your account list), it may be worthwhile to consider hiring an experienced typist (such as an office temp) to do much of the typing. Chances are they will do the job much more quickly and accurately than you.

When you're confident that you understand the working of a business application program, and your company data has been entered, you are ready to apply the program to your situation. Here it is very important that you "run parallel," which means that in addition to entering the data into the computer you also should continue to handle the data manually for at least 30 days. Be sure to compare your hand-generated documents with the computer-generated documents. If they don't agree, find out why. It may be the program, although that's doubtful. Establish what you have done wrong, and make the appropriate corrections. Then run parallel for another 30 days just to be on the safe side.

Good luck. •

*Jeffrey Rosenthal is an operator and a tax accountant. His firm, M&J Tax Services, Ltd., markets a route-management software package called VENDBASE. For information about the program, including a demonstration disk, write M&J at 1967 Bath Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11214, or call (718) 232-0342.*

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# PLAYERS'

# PICKS

by  
**Steve Harris and  
The U.S. National Video Game Team**

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## Good themes make good games

"What makes a good game good?"

That is the one question most frequently asked of members of the U.S. National Video Game Team. Operators, distributors, and manufacturers alike all want the secret formula that spells success.

By re-examining some of the video-game hits and blunders released in recent years you can trace the roots of a coin-op game's potential. By analyzing the good qualities of those games it becomes apparent that games with simple and original play themes usually fare well. When analyzing recent high-production titles such as *Gauntlet*, the game-theme plays an even larger role by setting the mood and creating an appealing environment.

Take the first laser-driven video game, *Dragon's Lair*. Cinematronics and Magicom took full advantage of existing technology to produce slick animation that the player could interact with. By itself, *Dragon's Lair* (and the offspring it spawned) was limited in its game play. But, because of its popular theme (a princess-in-peril-dragon-slaying-medieval adventure) that had a built-in following of enthusiasts, *Dragon's Lair* quickly shot to the top of the charts. Had subsequent laser games appeared before it, *Dragon's Lair* and the whole laser-disc genre likely would have passed away quickly. Instead laser-disc technology became a thorn in the side of the industry, and what seemed to be salvation turned out to be an unprofitable gamble.

Had Cinematronics offered *Dragon's Lair 2* as the first laser-disc follow-up, I believe we would be seeing further releases using this fledgling technology, with operators reporting takes as high as *Dragon's Lair* initially pulled in. Unfortunately, manufac-

turers never fully realized that it was not the technology, but the games themselves that would interest players. And because game interaction was never a strong point, it's easy to see why the subject matter appealed to players most.

Although they don't boast \$2,000 peripherals, conventional video games are bound by the same manufacturing ideologies that determined the success and ultimate failure of the laser-disc games. That's why now there are more than a dozen karate-type games as well as a recent influx of multi-player games inspired by the profitability of *Gauntlet*.

That's not to say that variations of existing play themes are always detrimental. Repackaging old games with new graphics and mechanics often proves successful. But the more original the game idea is, the more likely the game is to make money and become a trendsetter.

A game's theme dictates player involvement. Video games with a goal or storyline have become increasingly popular, providing players with a wide variety of challenges and a built-in entertainment to try again.

Games that promote interaction with other players are a nice sight in the arcades. Many new friends have been made on *Gauntlet* expeditions or while searching for magical mushrooms in *Super Mario Bros*. These and other titles encourage a dialogue that benefits the gameroom and provides a common topic of discussion.

There will always be a lack of original game themes, but as new advancements in game hardware appear and computer limitations are reduced, we will undoubtedly be seeing more and more new and diverse scenarios. Soon the only limitation video games will have will be

the creativity of their designers.

### Game profiles

A recent trend in video-game manufacturing is machines that use a multi-player format. Enabling players to join in at any time, these games have themes adapted to accommodate two, three, and even four players simultaneously in competition.

This month we'll look at several new products with multi-player formats, including a sneak peak at Bally Midway's latest entry, *Rampage*, which has received our "Player's Seal of Approval." We'll also profile and endorse three other games: Trade-west's premier effort, *Ikari Warriors*; Bally Sente's new trivia offering, *Name That Tune*; and Tecmo's newest conversion, *Rygar*.

The U.S. National Video Game Team urges you to consider our game endorsements when you buy new equipment. Games that receive our "Player's Seal of Approval" have been player-tested and meet the toughest standards.

### Bally Midway's *Rampage*

Long before the success of *Gauntlet*, Bally Midway already had enjoyed success using a similar format that allowed direct player involvement. Games like *Two Tigers* and *Demolition Derby* emphasized the importance of team play while giving operators the ability to reap twice the profits.

Now Midway has used its "Join the Action" play format to its limit in *Rampage*, a game that is without a doubt one of the most original and potentially profitable titles of the year.

Before the game begins, the player must choose one of three distinctively different characters he will represent. There's George, a brilliant scientist





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who transforms into a gorilla of incredible proportions; Lizzie, a swift athlete who doubles as a Godzilla look-alike; and Ralph, a wolf-man who stands 30 feet tall.

The theme of *Rampage* is destruction. Able to grab, punch, and jump, the three player-controlled monsters make their way along the outer structures of a variety of buildings in the downtown areas of major U.S. cities.

The goal is to destroy the cities by inflicting abundant damage upon each building. When a structure sustains too much damage, it crumbles to the ground. This awards extra points and advances play to larger cities with better defenses.

Out to defeat the player are hundreds of national guardsmen who appear out of windows and in tanks and helicopters brandishing rifles. The monsters can gobble them up or smash them into oblivion.

In between rounds, press updates are given to list the player's status and provide a humorous overtone to the mayhem. Alerts are also given to major cities, adding a personalized touch that players can identify with.

When a player takes too many hits, the creatures revert to their original human shapes before saunter-

ing off the screen stark naked.

*Rampage's* visuals are outstanding, rendered with a comedic style that brings life and laughter to what could have been a shallow effort. The graphics are so convincing you can see the humiliation on the faces of the would-be monsters as they slowly shuffle off, being careful not to expose themselves, at the end of every game. And it's equally entertaining to see a guardsman or civilian being savored in the jaws of one of the creatures. It's important that the violence is not overdone as it was in Exidy's *Chiller*; it's fun to watch and makes *Rampage* a great game for spectators as well.

There is a wide range of sound effects to accompany the monsters and their surroundings. The creatures roar, tanks explode, and buildings collapse as sirens blare and helicopters whirl about in the background. This game has atmosphere, and lots of it.

*Rampage* also features surprises that make each game different and keep players on the edge of their seats. Behind certain windows food items are hidden that increase the player's stamina, while neon signs, lightbulbs, televisions, etc. give electric shocks that decrease the player's strength when they're touched.

The cabinet that houses *Rampage* has been expertly designed to accommodate three players comfortably without taking up too much space. Its dimensions are relatively small, but they provide a lot of mobility and elbow room.

There are three groups of controls. One group directly faces the monitor, and the others are set at a slight angle to give everyone good view. A lone eight-way joystick is accompanied by two buttons. One is for jumping from building to building, and the other is for punching obstacles and grabbing people, food, and other objects.

*Rampage* is definitely one of the best games of 1986. Its attention to style and its black humor (something rarely attempted and never with such witty style) are marvelous, and the fast-paced action is original and exciting.

Although a game of *Rampage* will seldom last longer than a couple of minutes, players won't feel cheated. The game's continuation feature is like a built-in magnet, pulling quarters from the pockets of players like no game before it.

Unlike *Gauntlet*, in which players only interact with the computer adversaries, *Rampage* gives players the

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choice of working together to destroy the skyscrapers or duking it out to the finish. Indeed, *Rampage* is one of those few games that promotes player camaraderie.

Because *Rampage* features dozens of cities to be destroyed, there are a number of promotions you can use to draw additional attention to the game. Contests that give away tokens to the first player who completes the game (a feat that would require a lot of quarters) would be an easy way to entice repeat play. Other tournaments could use a similar approach but feature team play. Use your imagination.

But whatever you do, don't miss *Rampage*. Its appeal will be felt for some time to come by players and operators alike. *Rampage* is a highly recommended monster of a game.

### Tradewest's *Ikari Warriors*

Spawned by the success of films such as "Rambo" and "Commando," Tradewest's debut release, *Ikari Warriors* delivers some of the best military action ever seen in a coin-op game. If *Ikari Warriors*, licensed from SNK, is any indication of things to come from this new company, Tradewest should enjoy a long and prosperous life.

The game opens with a plane crash into a dense jungle far behind enemy lines. Leaving the wreckage, the player's bandana-clad characters proceed, armed only with a machine gun and a satchel of hand grenades, on a search-and-destroy mission to locate the *Ikari* village, where a special prize awaits.

On their way to *Ikari*, players must contend with opposing troops, including soldiers armed with rocket launchers and flame throwers. Later battles, which increase in difficulty as play progresses, involve tanks, transports, and helicopter gunships.

Players can increase their inventory of shells by eliminating ammunition stockpiles and certain enemy soldiers. Special symbols appear that award extra bullets or grenades and provide a number of special abilities that help in eradicating opposing forces and extending firing capability. Occasionally a vacant tank will appear that the player can use for additional mobility and firepower.

The terrain changes frequently, requiring different strategies on different battlefields. Players must navigate over bridges, wade through swamplands, and walk the barren streets of cities carefully avoiding enemy soldiers and hidden mines as

they advance.

The resolution of *Ikari Warriors* graphics is exceptional. Although there is little difference in the appearance of the soldiers and their weapons, they are animated with style to give each a unique personality. Even though players don't interact with them, the background visuals create the feeling of being in a hostile environment, an emotion that is hard to achieve.

*Ikari Warriors* also has some great music that keeps pace with the action. It's a fast-paced tune with decidedly patriotic overtones. Most of the sound effects are simple explosions and rattat-tats, but they are used with great effect.

The control panel, although it looks a bit strange, is well suited for the game. A single joystick is flanked by a pair of buttons, one to fire bullets, the other grenades. The joystick pivots to enable the player to head in one direction while firing in another.

*Ikari Warriors* is perfect for fans of "Rambo" and other patriotic shoot-em-ups. The intensity of the game keeps the player constantly involved, and the variety of weapons he has at his disposal is sure to generate the feelings of omnipotence the game is intended to deliver. *Ikari Warriors* definitely gives you the most bang for your buck.

Tradewest should be commended for producing *Ikari Warriors* in conversion form, because it is worthy of a dedicated game's price tag.

### Tecmo's *Rygar*

Tecmo (formerly Tehkan) is probably best known for its recent rendition of Atari's multi-player black-and-white smash of the '70s, *Football*. The follow-up *Gridiron Fight*, and a similar head-to-head sports offering, *World Cup*, have brought this company to the attention of players everywhere who enjoy a challenge.

Now Tecmo is armed with another offering, *Rygar*, that relies on the proven success of favorites such as *Ghosts 'N Goblins* and *Super Marios Bros.* while throwing in enough extras to make it truly outstanding.

Although this game doesn't exactly fit into the multi-player theme of this column, it does have enough bang to make it worth mentioning.

Play starts after a brief outline of the story explains, somewhat haphazardly, that a new dictator has seized control of the peaceful worlds that the legendary warrior *Rygar* has been entrusted to protect.

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A dangerous forest is the setting of the contest, which pits the player against both prehistoric and futuristic creatures. Providing additional play value are golden tombs that contain hidden objects that not only increase the player's score considerably, but also enhance Rygar's ability.

To help defeat the monsters, the player is armed with an unusual buzz-saw weapon that stretches out a short distance, eliminating any nasties in the way, before rebounding back. By manipulating the joystick simultaneously, the player can send the buzz-saw in a circular motion, defending Rygar from every direction.

By collecting special tokens that appear occasionally, the player can extend the striking distance of Rygar, destroy land monsters by jumping on them, extend the buzz-saw directly upward, and make Rygar invincible for a short time.

Each round ends when the player reaches a meditation chamber to receive bonus points for creatures killed, established rank, and remaining time.

Subsequent rounds feature new, more challenging adversaries, and require increasingly precise jumping and firing. While some levels concentrate the action on the fighting, others emphasize jumping skills, keeping players constantly involved while providing a variety of scenarios. This is a nice touch that prevents *Rygar* from becoming repetitive.

The graphics of *Rygar* are more than adequate for its theme. The

background and foreground visuals are rendered in a pleasing, colorful style. Animation is sparse, but handled effectively and with great attention to detail.

*Rygar's* audio presents the usual spectrum of sound effects while throwing in a couple of interesting touches.

A standard eight-way joystick moves Rygar and aims his lethal weapon. Two buttons help the player jump and fire. The set-up is simple and easy to get accustomed to.

On the surface, *Rygar* is a repackaged version of no less than a dozen previous games. But what separates it from others in this genre are additional features for frequent players. Secret items and bonus-point awards provide risk-taking incentives that should sustain interest and prolong the game's life. As a conversion, *Rygar* stands above the crowd.

### **Bally Sente's Name That Tune**

Audio enhancements usually are considered nothing more than additions that can increase the appeal of a good game. But musical and vocal effects do play an important role in the success or failure of a game. Playing a video game with no sound is like watching "Star Wars" without John Williams' riveting score—a bit of the attraction is lost.

Rarely, however, has the audio of a game been as vital as it is in Bally Sente's release for its economical SAC 1 system, a coin-op rendition of the television program, "Name That

Tune."

Using all the elements that made the television show so successful, Sente's *Name That Tune* plays identically. Players face off against each other or the computer in matches that test musical knowledge. Players receive clues to the songs and, by using one of four buttons, must make a correct choice before time runs out. Next comes Bid-a-Note, in which the opponents face off in an attempt to identify a tune in fewer notes. The player who has scored best at that point goes on to "Melody Roulette" in which six songs must be named before 12 seconds elapse.

The musical reproduction in *Name That Tune* is outstanding and sure to attract crowds wherever it's placed. Sente has done a great job of selecting a broad range of tunes that will appeal to a variety of age groups. Not only are there standards like "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" but contemporary pop hits like "Karma Chameleon" and rock classics in the vein of "I Heard it Through the Grapevine."

High-resolution graphics are used during many stages of play to add color and activity to the game.

By taking the basics of a trivia game and incorporating incredibly faithful reproductions of musical favorites, Sente has produced one of the most addictive question-and-answer games to date. *Name That Tune* would make an excellent addition to nightclub locations and should be a welcome sight to all operators of SAC 1 systems. ●

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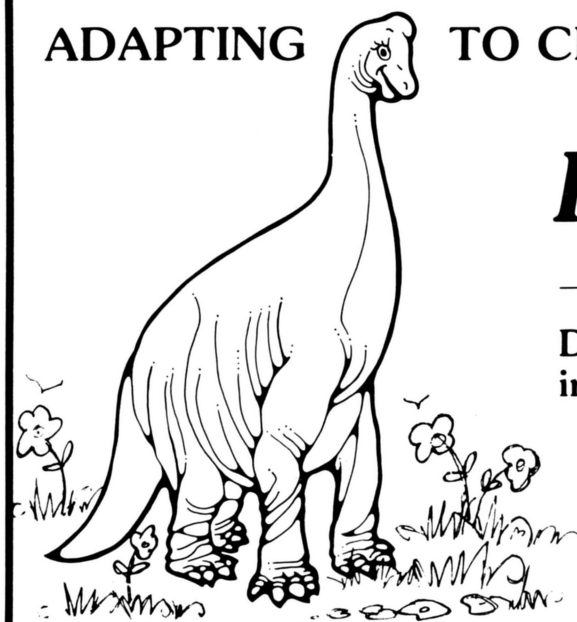
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# NATIONAL PLAY METER

## Poll Information

The following are rankings of the top games in the coin-operated amusement industry. The games are ranked according to an index formulated from a regular survey of operators of coin-operated amusement equipment. Games not appearing on this poll either (1) did not generate a five percent response or (2) did not rank among the top 50 games in the country. The games are further identified by their general equipment classification type: Video, Pinball, and Novelty. The average index rating for all surveyed games for this individual survey was 79.

### Top Ten Games of August 15 Issue

Game/Manufacturer	Index Rating	Game/Manufacturer	Index Rating
1. <b>Quartet/Sega</b> .....	300	7. <b>Hang-On (Mini)/Sega</b> .....	143
2. <b>Ikari Warriors/Tradewest</b> .....	260	8. <b>High Speed/Williams</b> .....	140
3. <b>Speed Buggy/Data East</b> .....	207	8. <b>Halley's Comet/Coin-It/Taito</b> ....	140
4. <b>Rygar/Tecmo</b> .....	180	10. <b>World Series/Cinematronics</b> ....	135
5. <b>Gauntlet/Atari</b> .....	175	10. <b>Crusin'/Kitkorp</b> .....	135
6. <b>Paperboy/Atari</b> .....	145		

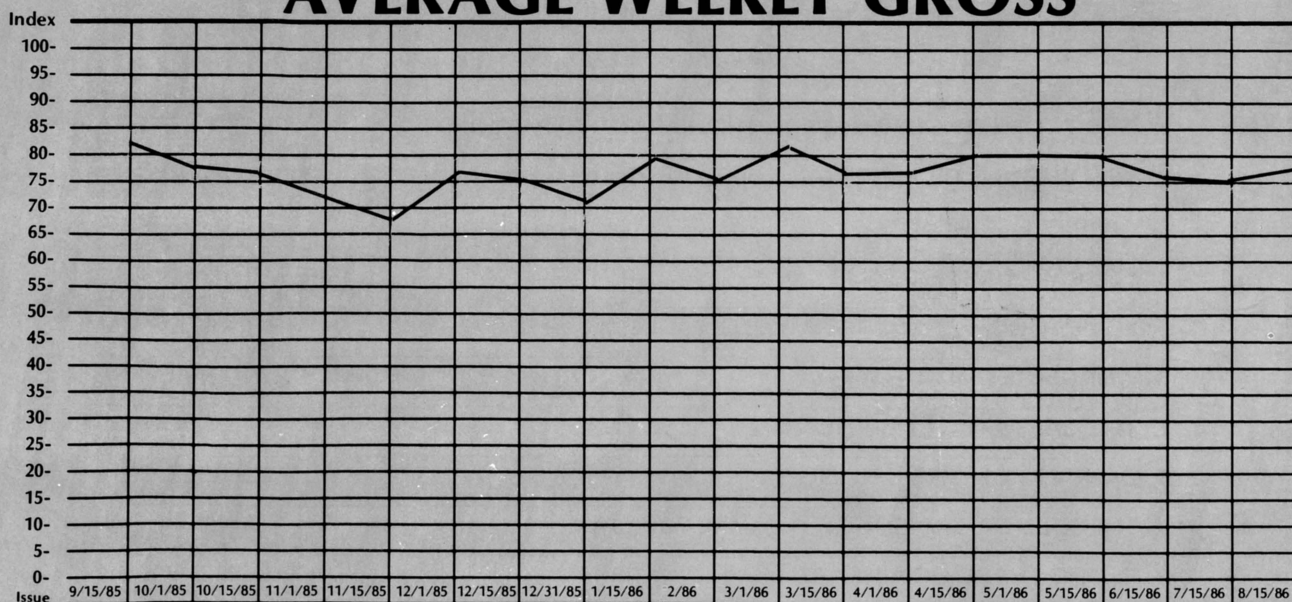
Game/Manufacturer	Aug. 15	July 15	June 15	May 15	Video	Pinball	Novelty
1. Quartet/Sega	300	—	—	—	•		
2. Ikari Warriors/Tradewest	260	232	183	—	•		
3. Speed Buggy/Data East	207	—	—	—	•		
4. Rygar/Tecmo	180	—	—	—	•		
5. Gauntlet/Atari	175	170	166	236	•		
6. Paperboy/Atari	145	118	92	113	•		
7. Hang-On (Mini)/Sega	143	149	—	—	•		
8. High Speed/Williams	140	161	130	187		•	
8. Halley's Comet/Coin-It/Taito	140	—	—	—	•		
10. World Series, The Season/Cinematronics	135	166	179	154	•		
10. Crusin'/Kitkorp	135	86	—	—	•		
12. Hang-On (upright)/Sega	129	133	194	186	•		
13. Hollywood Heat/Premier	128	—	—	—		•	
14. Sarge/Bally Midway	120	149	78	70	•		
15. Super Punch Out!!!/Nintendo	118	124	102	82	•		
16. Temple of Doom/Atari	116	84	92	109	•		
16. VS. Baseball/Nintendo	116	56	67	73	•		
18. Pac-Land/Bally Midway	115	120	—	81	•		
19. Mania Challenge/Memetron/Taito	113	175	208	—	•		
20. Cheyenne/Exidy	111	101	95	93	•		
21. T.N.K. III/Kitkorp	108	88	86	—	•		
22. Break Thru/Data East	107	95	119	—	•		
23. VS. Super Mario Bros./Nintendo	104	99	99	118	•		
24. Mat Mania/Memetron	101	90	117	112	•		

NOTICE: The sole purpose of this survey is to determine on a regular basis the top performing games in the country. Any attempt to use the results of this survey for any other purpose is unauthorized, wrongful, and misleading.

# NATIONAL PLAY METER

Game/Manufacturer	Aug. 15	July 15	June 15	May 15	Video	Pinball	Novelty
25. <i>Spy Hunter</i> /Bally Midway	100	103	92	111	•		
25. <i>Land-Sea-Air Squad</i> /Taito	100	67	—	—	•		
27. <i>Gladiator</i> /Taito	99	147	—	—	•		
28. <i>Lode Runner</i> /Digital Controls	98	—	—	—	•		
28. <i>Shootout</i> /Data East	98	—	158	—	•		
28. <i>Terra Cresta</i> /Nichibutsu	98	81	97	—	•		
31. <i>Ghosts 'N Goblins</i> /Romstar/Taito	97	91	103	—	•		
32. <i>Jailbreak</i> /Konami	96	78	109	100	•		
33. <i>Pole Position II</i> /Atari	91	84	84	95	•		
34. <i>Ring King</i> /Data East	90	86	104	137	•		
35. <i>Little Casino III</i> /Digital Controls	88	62	—	53	•		
35. <i>Hat Trick</i> /Bally Sente	88	116	68	105	•		
37. <i>VS. Ladies Golf</i> /Nintendo	85	93	60	33	•		
37. <i>Tiger Heli</i> /Romstar/Taito	85	98	90	93	•		
39. <i>Comet</i> /Williams	84	101	110	144		•	
40. <i>Demolition Derby</i> /Bally Midway	83	99	84	138	•		
40. <i>Phraze Craze</i> /Merit	83	81	121	—	•		
42. <i>Commando</i> /Data East	82	72	79	99	•		
43. <i>Jacks to Open</i> /Gottlieb	81	48	38	45		•	
44. <i>Space Shuttle</i> /Williams	80	85	82	94		•	
44. <i>1942</i> /Romstar	80	73	79	81	•		
46. <i>Karate Champ</i> /Data East	78	55	70	60	•		
46. <i>X's and O's</i> /Bally Midway	78	55	33	52		•	
46. <i>Choplifter</i> /Sega	78	82	92	107	•		
49. <i>Kung Fu Master</i> /Data East	77	79	76	95	•		
50. <i>Pole Position</i> /Atari	76	79	72	72	•		

## AVERAGE WEEKLY GROSS





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## TOP TEN



TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1. GLORY OF LOVE (THEME FROM "THE KARATE KID PART II")	PETER CETERA WARNER BROS. 7-28662
2. SLEDGEHAMMER	PETER GABRIEL GEFFEN 7-28718/WARNER BROS.
3. DANGER ZONE	KENNY LOGGINS COLUMBIA 38-05893
4. PAPA DON'T PREACH	MADONNA SIRE 7-28660/WARNER BROS.
5. INVISIBLE TOUCH	GENESIS ATLANTIC 7-89407
6. MAD ABOUT YOU	BELINDA CARLISLE I.R.S. 52815/MCA
7. LOVE TOUCH (THEME FOR "LEGAL EAGLES")	ROD STEWART WARNER BROS. 7-28668
8. NASTY	JANET JACKSON A&M 2830
9. WE DON'T HAVE TO TAKE OUR CLOTHES OFF	JERMAINE STEWART ARISTA 1-9424
10. OPPORTUNITIES (LET'S MAKE LOTS OF MONEY)	PET SHOP BOYS EMI-AMERICA 8330

## Adult Contemporary

TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1. GLORY OF LOVE (THEME FROM THE "KARATE KID PART II")	PETER CETERA WARNER BROS. 7-28662
2. YOU SHOULD BE MINE (THE WOO WOO SONG)	JEFFREY OSBORNE A&M 2814
3. INVISIBLE TOUCH	GENESIS ATLANTIC 7-89407
4. YOUR WILDEST DREAMS	THE MOODY BLUES POLYDOR 883096-7/POLYGRAM
5. LOVE TOUCH (THEME FROM "LEGAL EAGLES")	ROD STEWART WARNER BROS. 7-28668
6. WORDS GET IN THE WAY	MIAMI SOUND MACHINE EPIC 34-06120
7. THE CAPTAIN OF HER HEART	DOUBLE A&M 2838
8. DANCING ON THE CEILING	LIONEL RICHIE MOTOWN 1843
9. THERE'LL BE SAD SONGS (TO MAKE YOU CRY)	BILLY OCEAN JIVE/ARISTA 1-9465/ARISTA
10. IN THE SHAPE OF A HEART	JACKSON BROWNE ASYLUM 7-69543/ELEKTRA

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# Country

TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1. NOBODY IN HIS RIGHT MIND WOULD'VE LEFT HER	GEORGE STRAIT MCA 52817
2. ROCKIN' WITH THE RHYTHM OF THE RAIN	THE JUDDS RCA/CURB 14362/RCA
3. YOU'RE THE LAST THING I NEEDED TONIGHT	JOHN SCHNEIDER MCA 52827
4. SAVIN' MY LOVE FOR YOU	PAKE MCENTIRE RCA 14336
5. STRONG HEART	T.G. SHEPPARD COLUMBIA 38-05905
6. WILL THE WOLF SURVIVE	WAYLON JENNINGS MCA 52830
7. COUNT ON ME	THE STATLER BROTHERS MERCURY 884 721-7/POLYGRAM
8. HEARTBEAT IN THE DARKNESS	DON WILLIAMS CAPITOL 5588
9. ON THE OTHER HAND	RANDY TRAVIS WARNER BROS. 7-28962
10. I'VE GOT A NEW HEARTACHE	RICKY SKAGGS EPIC 34-05898

# Dance Disco

TITLE	ARTIST Label & Number/Distributing Label
1. RUMORS/VICIOUS RUMORS	TIMEX SOCIAL CLUB JAY 001/MACOLA
2. VENUS	BANANARAMA LONDON 886 056-1/POLYGRAM
3. AIN'T NOTHIN' GOIN' ON BUT THE RENT	GWEN GUTHRIE POLYDOR 885 106-1/POLYGRAM
4. OPPORTUNITIES (LET'S MAKE LOTS OF MONEY) (REMIX)	PET SHOP BOYS EMI-AMERICA V-19206
5. OH L'AMOUR (REMIX)/WALK ON DOWN THE LINE	ERASURE SIRE 0-20488/WARNER BROS.
6. ARTIFICIAL HEART (REMIX)/OH NO IT'S U AGAIN	CHERRELLE TABU 429-05386/EPIC
7. NO PROMISES (REMIX)	ICEHOUSE CHRYSALIS 4V9-43009
8. SLEDGEHAMMER (REMIX)	PETER GABRIEL Geffen 0-20456/WARNER BROS.
9. POINT OF NO RETURN (REMIX)	NU SHOOZ ATLANTIC 0-86802
10. ON YOUR OWN (REMIX)	PETE SHELLEY MERCURY 884 751-1/POLYGRAM



## Tax aspects of bankruptcy

This explanation, which applies to bankruptcy cases begun after April 1, 1984, covers federal income-tax rules relating to bankruptcy and discharging debt. The rules were affected substantially by the Bankruptcy Act of 1984, which reflected a major revision of the U.S. bankruptcy laws.

Because the tax structures of most states are based on the federal income-tax system, most likely the implications relevant to your state income tax will be the same.

### Cancellation of indebtedness

If any of your debts is forgiven or cancelled, other than as a gift to you, you generally must include the cancelled amount in your gross income for income-tax purposes.

If you owe a debt to a seller for the purchase of property, and the seller later reduces the amount you owe, you generally do not have income from the reduction, even if you are not bankrupt or insolvent. The reduction of the debt is treated as an adjustment of the purchase price and therefore reduces your basis (cost for tax purposes) in the property.

### Exclusion from gross income

While the general rules require you to include a cancelled debt in gross income, you are not required to do so if any of the following three situations apply:

1. The cancellation takes place in a bankruptcy case under any of the Title 11 chapters of the United States Code.
2. The cancellation takes place when the debtor is insolvent, and the excluded amount is not more than the amount by which the debtor is insolvent.
3. The cancelled indebtedness is "qualified business indebtedness"—a debt of a corporation or any debt that relates to business property—and the debtor chooses to reduce the basis of the property by the cancelled amount.

A debtor is insolvent when, and to the extent that, his liabilities exceed

the fair market value of his assets. For any discharge of indebtedness, liabilities and the fair market value of assets are determined immediately before the discharge.

A debt cancelled when the debtor is insolvent is excluded from gross income up to the amount by which the debtor is insolvent. Nevertheless, the amount excluded must be used to reduce certain tax attributes (benefits), which are discussed later in this article.

### Order of exclusions

If a cancelled debt is excluded from income because it takes place in a Title 11 bankruptcy case, then the insolvency and business-debt exclusions (2 and 3 above) do not apply. The business-indebtedness exclusion also does not apply to the extent the debtor is insolvent.

### Bankruptcy case exclusion

A bankruptcy case is considered under Title 11 of the United States Code if it is under the jurisdiction of the court and the discharge of the debt is granted by the court or pursuant to a court-approved plan.

None of the indebtedness cancelled in a bankruptcy case is included in the debtor's gross income in the year of the cancellation. Instead, the amount cancelled must be used to reduce certain tax attributes.

### Qualified business-indebtedness exclusion

The debtor may exclude the discharge of qualified business debt from gross income if he chooses to reduce the basis (cost for tax purposes) of property which by law must be depreciated. Qualified business debt is debt that was incurred or assumed in connection with property used in a trade or business.

The amount excluded cannot be more than the total adjusted basis of all depreciable property held by the taxpayer at the beginning of the tax year following the tax year in which the discharge takes place. This total

adjusted basis is determined after any required reduction of tax attributes for a discharge in bankruptcy or insolvency.

### Inclusion in gross income

If an amount of cancelled debt cannot be excluded from income under the three provisions discussed previously, it must be included in gross income. Income is *not* realized from debt cancellation, however, to the extent that payment of the debt would have given rise to a deduction. Here are two examples:

1. You use the cash method of accounting in your business, and you obtain business-accounting services on credit. Later you have trouble paying your business debts. Although you are not bankrupt or insolvent, your accountant forgives part of the amount you owe him for his services. You *do not* include the amount of the debt cancellation in income, because payment would have been deductible as a business expense. It is considered a reduction in the cost of services performed.

2. You use the accrual method of accounting, but otherwise the circumstances are the same as in example 1. You *must* include the accountant's cancellation of your debt in your income because, under the accrual method, the expense is deductible when the liability is incurred, not when the debt is paid.

### Abandonment

In the year business property is permanently abandoned because of an unforeseen change in business conditions, normal depreciation should be claimed. The abandonment is treated as a sale or exchange in which the selling price is salvage value. The loss must be claimed in the year of abandonment even if you sell or otherwise dispose of the property in a later year. Mere non-use of the property is not abandonment; you must permanently discard the property because it is of no further profitable use to you.



The loss is expected to be explained fully on your tax return.

### Reduction of tax attributes (benefits)

Indebtedness excluded from income because it is cancelled in a bankruptcy case or during insolvency must be used to reduce certain "tax attributes" of the debtor's. By reducing these tax attributes, tax on the cancelled debt is in part postponed instead of being entirely forgiven, and an excessive tax benefit from the cancelled debt is prevented.

You either may reduce the basis of depreciable property or you must reduce the tax attributes in the following order:

1. Reduce any net operating loss for the tax year in which the debt cancellation takes place and any net operating loss (NOL) carried over to that tax year.

2. Reduce any carryover, to or from the tax year of the debt cancelled, of amounts used to determine the following credits:

- The investment credit (except amounts attributable to the employee-plan credit)
- The work-incentive-program (WIN) credit
- The jobs credit
- The alcohol-fuel credit

3. Reduce any net capital loss for the tax year of the debt cancellation, and any capital loss to that year.

4. Reduce the basis of the debtor's property, both depreciable and non-depreciable. You may, however, use this option first before reduction of any attributes.

5. Reduce any carryover, to or from the tax year of the debt cancellation, of an amount used to determine the foreign-tax credit.

### Individuals' tax attributes

If the debtor is an individual filing for bankruptcy under Chapter 7 (liquidation) or Chapter 11 (reorganization) of Title 11 of the United States Code, the required reduction of tax attributes must be made to the attributes acquired by the bankruptcy estate, a separate taxable entity resulting from the filing of the case. Also, the choice

of whether to first reduce the basis of depreciable property before reducing other tax attributes must be made by the trustee of the bankruptcy estate.

### Individuals' bankruptcy estates

If an individual debtor files for bankruptcy under chapters 7 or 11 of the Bankruptcy Code, a separate "estate" is created consisting of property that had belonged to the debtor before the filing date. This bankruptcy estate is a new taxable entity, completely separate from the individual debtor. The estate is managed by a trustee for the benefit of any creditors, and it may produce its own income as well as incur its own expenses.

The creation of a separate bankruptcy estate gives the individual debtor a fresh start—wages earned and property bought by the individual after the bankruptcy case has begun belong to him and do *not* become part of the bankruptcy estate.

A separate entity is *not* created for a corporation, a partnership, or an individual who files for bankruptcy under Chapter 13 Title 11, United States Code (Wage Earner Bankruptcy).

If a bankruptcy case involving an individual debtor was begun but later dismissed by the bankruptcy court, the estate is not treated as a separate entity. The individual debtor is treated as if the bankruptcy petition had never been filed.

### Choice to end tax year

An individual debtor who has assets other than those that may be treated as exempt property *may* choose to end his tax year on the day before the filing of his bankruptcy case. Once made, this choice is irrevocable. If the choice is made, the debtor's tax year is divided into two short tax years of less than 12 months each. The first year ends on the day before the filing date of the bankruptcy, and the second year begins with the filing date.

Once the choice is made, the individual debtor's income-tax liability for the first short tax year becomes an allowable claim (as a claim arising before the bankruptcy) against the

bankruptcy estate. Any tax liability for that year is collectible from the estate as long as enough assets are available to pay off the estate's debt.

If the assets of the bankruptcy estate are not enough to pay any tax due for that year, the remaining liability is *not dischargeable* in the bankruptcy case, and will be due and collectible from the individual debtor after the bankruptcy case. If no choice to end the tax year is made, then no part of the debtor's tax liability for the year in which bankruptcy proceedings begin can be collected from the estate.

If the debtor making the choice is married, his spouse also may choose to end the tax year, but only if the debtor and the spouse file a joint return for the first short tax year.

An individual debtor who chooses to end his tax year does so by filing a return on Form 1040 for the first short tax year on or before the 15th day of the fourth full month after the end of that first tax year. The return should be marked "Section 1398 Election" at the top and must include a statement that says the individual debtor chooses under Section 1398(d)(2) to close his tax year on the day before the filing of the bankruptcy case. If you are married, and your spouse also opts for a short tax year, your spouse also must sign the statement.

A debtor choosing to end the tax year also must file a separate form 1040 for the second short tax year by the regular due date. The debtor should note on the return that it is the second short-tax-year return after Section 1398 Election.

### Annualizing taxable income

The individual debtor who chooses to close his tax year *must* annualize his taxable income for each short tax year in the same way that is done for a change in an annual accounting period. For information on this, see "Short Tax Year" in the free IRS publication 538. •

*Jeffrey Rosenthal is an operator and a tax accountant. He can be reached by writing M&J Tax Service, Ltd., 1967 Bath Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11214, or calling (718) 232-0342.*

DON'T MISS



MARCH 20 THRU 22



# FRANK'S CRANKS



By  
Frank "The Crank"  
Seninsky

## Bally aiming high



Steve Blattspieler, vice president of sales for Bally Midway and Sente, smiles as test-report figures on *Rampage* are phoned in. Steve is confident Bally has a winner.

I recently went to Chicago at the invitation of Bally Sente's president, Bob Lundquist. I had been working with Bally's Tom Locke for the previous six months testing various Sente system games in family-restaurant chains. What is happening now is that manufacturers are bringing in operators to help them with their new-game decisions. There is a tremendous amount of direct communication between manufacturers and operators, and that is just what this industry needs.

Although Lundquist couldn't be in Chicago that day, I was welcomed by Maury Ferchen, president of Bally's coin-op division and the AAMA; Steve Blattspieler, vice president of sales; Tom Locke, vice president of sales development; Jan Wahby, director of sales; and Dick Konopa, sales manager. The main purpose of the visit was to review Sente's latest system game, *Night Stocker*, which is about 40 percent complete. I can't discuss that game further now, but I also saw

what I feel may be the hottest video since *Gauntlet*—Midway's *Rampage*.

*Rampage* is a three-player game in which the player can be any of three monsters: King Kong, Ralph the Wolf, or Lizzie the Lizzard. Jeff Nauman did most of the programming and Brian Colin was responsible for the art work. Nauman, only 27 years old, programmed *Demolition Derby*, *Sarge* (which is a good game many operators never tried), and *Shoot the Bull*. He has included 768 different "days" into *Rampage*, with 128 days per cycle. There is little chance that players will get bored easily with this game. Players can destroy 85 different cities as the adventure starts in Chicago and loops across the U.S. *Rampage* has been earning \$100 a day for several weeks at seven Aladdin's Castle arcades. No one expects to see initial grosses as large as *Gauntlet's*, but *Rampage* looks like it will be a steady piece (as steady as video can get these days).

**Black Belt** pinball: Bally Midway

has come up with what I'd rate as an excellent pinball game. Pins are very strong now, and smart operators are making large investments in this kind of equipment again. With the overwhelming success of Williams' *High Speed* (which I'd have to rate in its own novelty category because to rate it a 12 on a 1-to-10 scale doesn't seem just), manufacturers can better gauge what new pinball demand is.

Several features make *Black Belt* unique. Attract-mode instructions are clearly spelled out on the bottom score displays and with corresponding lights flashing on the playfield, so players can fully understand the strategy of the game. A soft shot off the ball shooter plunger for higher scoring brings back the "sensitive" part of pinball. Realistic-sounding groans enhance the karate theme. A multitude of still shots are incorporated to entice both seasoned and less skillful players. I really enjoyed keeping the ball going on the bottom half of the playfield, but Tom Locke likes to flip the ball back and forth on the upper ramp section. Now guess which of us is the avid player and which is less skillful.

I think Bally is making an excellent effort to produce top-earning games. Their goal, as Locke put it, is to have three hits at the same time; one for Sente, one for Midway, and one Bally pinball. That's not a bad goal to shoot for.

Incidentally, I just got off the phone with Bob Lloyd, president of Data East. He said he heard that Midway has a great game coming and he feels that a strong Bally is good for the industry. If Data East doesn't have the



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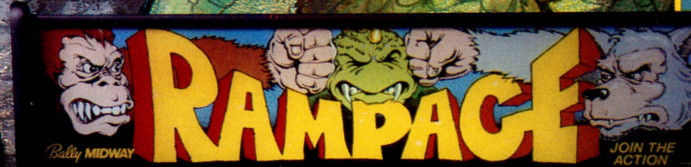
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top game at a particular time, then Lloyd would like to see Bally have it. Seems to me that Data East has had quite a monopoly of top games recently.

### Video-jukebox update

In the April 1 issue I wrote that operators should use the Rowe video jukebox to open doors for new locations with favorable commission arrangements, like \$150 a week for the operator. Many operators are still sitting back and letting a small group of aggressive operators get the jump on them. For what it's worth, here are parts of a letter from Pizza Management, Inc.,'s president and chairman, Arturo Torres, and Rowe's vice president, Joel Friedman, about a test with Pizza Hut restaurants:

"Now that we have had more than six month's history and experience with more than 20 Rowe video jukeboxes in Pizza Hut locations, I am most happy to give you the following information: ... we have experienced increased traffic in every location and increased food and beverage sales by more than 12 percent. ...



Brian Colin, left, and Jeff Nauman play a 65-percent-complete version of Bally Midway's new video, Rampage. Colin, who did the artwork, and programmer Nauman were two of four designers responsible for the game.

the goodwill which we are generating is tremendous. We have followed your ideas of extra monitors and speakers and the use of the self-programmable message centers. Each of our stores has been averaging more than \$200 per week."

As one operator to all of you operators, what more can I say to get you guys thinking?

For more information, I can be reached at Alpha-Omega Amusements and Sales, 6 Sutton Place, Edison, NJ 08817, 201/287-4900.

As always, keep cranking. ●

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## Refusing a raise request



by Susan C. Bakos

"I'd like to talk about a raise, boss."

What employer doesn't swallow a little harder when he hears that request from an employee these days? While everyone needs more and more money simply to stay even at clothing stores and checkout lanes, few employers also hit by a financial squeeze are able to grant pay increases easily. How can you refuse a raise without losing an employee or killing his work incentive?

First, don't allow yourself to be pushed into answering the raise question immediately. Set a conference date as soon as possible so you don't keep the employee dangling, but give yourself time to prepare.

Why is the answer "no" this time?

A company freeze on wages may be in effect, and explaining the refusal won't take much time. But don't send a good employee away from the interview feeling totally downcast. When can he expect a raise? What indicators do you have that the company's financial picture might be brightening in coming months? If you have positive information, share it. Give the employee something to look forward to.

Maybe raises are being granted from the company coffers, but not to this particular worker. The explanation is going to take a little more time and much more care. Helping someone understand why he doesn't qualify for a raise sometimes requires diplomatic skill.

If he hasn't been on the job long enough or received all the necessary

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*Most employees have been faced at least once with the hot-shot request: "I've got another offer. If you can't match it, I'll have to leave."*

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training, be specific about the requirements not met. Tell him how much longer he will need to work before he can expect a raise or what skills he needs to master. Avoid vague language. "When you've had a little more experience" is a depressing response from the employee's viewpoint.

Some employers have pay ceilings established for workers with a certain number of years on the job or who have attained minimal education levels. For example, John was making the ceiling wage for his position; the company was willing to pay him more money only if he took some additional supervisory courses on his own and broadened his skills. Fred, his boss, explains, "This is a small company. A worker who earns a good salary here is expected to cover a job and a half for his money."

John would have been willing to do this had anyone explained the situa-

tion to him. But Fred put off his requests for salary increases with vague refusals. John didn't know if the company couldn't afford the raise or didn't feel he should have one. He finally looked elsewhere for a job that paid the money he felt he deserved.

Don't lose a good worker because you haven't explained the reasons for the raise refusal. Whenever possible, outline a goal plan for the individual. Tell him what he needs to accomplish and in what time. Remember: when he does those things, he will expect a raise. Don't make promises you can't keep.

Sometimes the money is there for a raise, and the employee has fulfilled time on the job and other requirements, but his work simply doesn't merit additional pay. While this may sound difficult to explain, it really isn't. The raise request is refused, but for clear reasons which you can enumerate. Bring the employee's work file to the conference. Periodic reviews of his performance should already have disclosed work problems.

Now is the time to discuss those problems again, even if they were treated during appraisal sessions. This time you have a good chance of getting the worker to make the desired changes. He wants something—a raise—and he can't earn it without making changes in his job performance.

Again, be specific about what improvements are necessary and when you'll be willing to discuss the



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possibility of a raise again. No employee should leave this refusal conference without having a good idea of how to merit the raise in the future and when it's likely to happen. If he leaves in a state of confusion, he'll feel discouraged. He'll think, "There's no point in trying, because I'm not going to get a raise no matter what I do."

Help him take the performance obstacles to his raise and turn them into goals. Once the goals are accomplished, the obstacles are eliminated. He has what he wants, more money, while you have what you want, a more productive worker.

Some people may use special ploys to get the raise. They may cite personal hardship, which is difficult for any employer to refuse. But you can't be swayed. A business isn't a charity, and you'll have to make that clear.

Most employers have been faced at least once with the hot-shot request: "I've got another offer. If you can't match it, I'll have to leave." The person making this veiled threat may be a valuable worker, and he may really have that other offer.

Don't be pushed into a corner. Reacting in anger may only force a decision you don't want him to make. If you can't match the "offer," explain that, but leave the door open for the worker to change his mind about the ultimatum. Remind him of the benefits of his present job: room for future advancement, a good relationship with co-workers, high levels of trust and responsibility, or the opportunity to work in varied areas.

Salary is *not* the sole basis of job satisfaction, and occasionally employees need to be reminded of that. Tell him how much you value his contributions to the company and praise his strengths. Then end the interview by saying, "Please think about this for a few days before you make a decision."

You've given him the opportunity to back down gracefully. He feels valued. This appreciation may make up for the money you can't pay him yet.

Never allow a disgruntled employee to draw you into a too-frank discussion about the company's finances. Don't disclose the salaries earned by other employees. Above all, keep your cool and stick to the facts. Whenever you can, leave the door open for future salary negotiations. We all work better with a little hope. ●



## Unforeseen Evidence

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# Road Kings

Williams Electronics has introduced *Road Kings*, a motorcycle-themed pinball with multi-ball play, a new "time lock" feature, and a new sound system.

Players can begin multi-ball play and double scoring by locking up two balls. By locking up two balls again during multi-ball play, they start the time lock, which raises a power ramp for "mega" scoring and an extra ball. A detour ramp and a "power kick" also contribute to game play.

The new sound system in *Road Kings* features real-band audio reproduction, different themes orchestrated for different features, motorcycle revs, and taunting speech.

The backglass and pivoting playfield are easily accessible for service. The machine's automatic switch testing identifies a malfunctioning switch, reprograms play around it, and spells out on the alphanumeric display the switch needing repair. The display also provides instructions to players and adjustable-feature information to operators. Automatic replay percentaging is offered.

For more information, write Williams Electronics, Inc., 3401 N. California Ave., Chicago, IL 60618, or call (312) 267-2240.

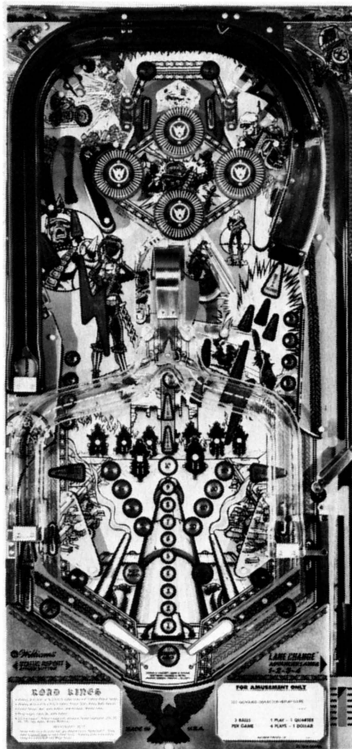
# Trimline

Public Pay Phone, Inc., has added the *Trimline* to its pay-telephone line.

The *Trimline* is California-legal and passes every other state's legal requirements, according to the company. It is modular in design for ease of operation and service.

Public Pay Phone manufactures the *Trimline* to the buyer's specifications for maximum option arrangement. It can be color-coordinated to match any decor.

For more details, write Public Pay Phone, Inc., 3800 Highland, Suite 300, Manhattan Beach, CA 90266, or call (213) 546-7668; in California call 1-800/342-5330.



# Knockdown

Meltec, Inc., the manufacturer of *Boom Ball*, has introduced *Knockdown*, a novelty game in which players shoot balls at nine cat-rack dolls trying to knock down as many as possible.

A two-station arcade package, the game comes with automatic ticket dispensers and a 115-volt plug-in portable air compressor.

Operators can adjust the number of shots, coinage, and ticket levels. The dolls reset automatically at the end of each game.

For more information, write Meltec, Inc., 1550 B Las Plumas Ave., San Jose, CA 95133, or call (408) 923-1302.





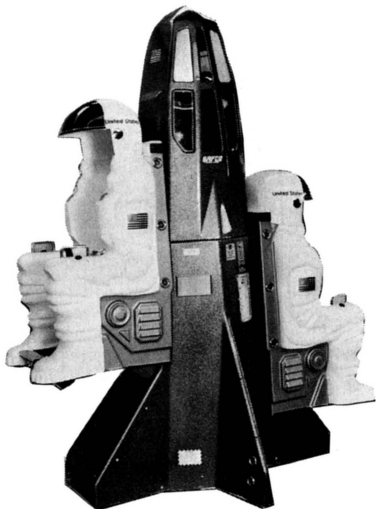


## Astronauts

Bafco, Ltd., has introduced *Astronauts*, a kiddie ride incorporating two individually coin-operated spacemen.

*Astronauts* is electro-mechanical with a vertical lift of 22 inches. It stands 92 inches high and 48 inches wide.

For more information on *Astronauts* and other new electro-mechanical rides, write Bafco, Ltd., Beechings Way, Alford, Lincolnshire LN 139JE England, or call 011-44-5212-6536.



## Sex Phraze Craze

Merit Industries has released a sex-phrase module for its *Phraze Craze* video game.

*Sex Phraze Craze* features new topics such as sex humor, sex phrases, street slang, love and marriage, sex technique, sex products, kinky sex, and XXX-rated phrases that are operator-selectable by dipswitch.

The chips are compatible with both horizontal and vertical versions of *Phraze Craze*, and Merit includes a program revision that displays new attract-mode screens to draw players, give them a choice for each game of either regular or sex phrases, and display a separate "sex crazies" high-score list.

For more information, write Merit Industries, P.O. Box 5004, 2525 State Road, Bensalem, PA 19020, or call (215) 639-4700 or 1-800/523-2760.

## Table Talk Plus

Tiffany Telcom has introduced *Table Talk Plus*, a cordless, coinless pay phone.

*Table Talk Plus* can be remotely vended. It features 96-percent-accurate answer supervision, a keyed lock system for programming and totals, and a complete rates table based on the phone company's central office where the unit is located.

*Table Talk Plus* users can pay with a credit card, a check, or cash, and receive a printed receipt.

For more information, write Tiffany Telcom, 216 S. Main, Box 650, Bowman, ND 58623, or call (701) 523-5633.



## Enduro Racer

Sega Enterprises has introduced *Enduro Racer*, a video driving game available in standard upright and wheelie versions.

*Enduro Racer* allows the player to perform wheelies to jump over barriers, pass through mud puddles, and avoid obstacles on the driving course.

Features include countersteering for returning balance to the cycle after cornering at high speed and counter-jumping for changing cycle direction in the air when cutting a corner or trying to keep from going off the track when landing.

An up-and-down-scrolling feature exclusive to *Enduro Racer* enables the player to understand the motion and excitement of jumping and riding over hills.

The wheelie version gives a range of upward, downward, and sideways movement yet uses no motors or other drive devices.

For more information, write Sega Enterprises, Inc., 2149 Paragon Drive, San Jose, CA 95131, or call (408) 435-0201.

## Easy Score

Wyvern Designs of England has introduced *Easy Score*, an electronic scoreboard for darts.

*Easy Score* incorporates a reproduction dartboard. To register a score, players touch the area that corresponds to the spot where the dart has landed on the game board.

*Easy Score* has large digital displays for each team that show the running score, the current score, the number of darts entered, and the last score. The running-score display shows the decreasing score as the game progresses. When three darts are correctly entered, the score is recorded by touching the "enter" button.

The last-score display shows the previous score entered. All scores for a game may be recalled and displayed by touching the "recall" button.

*Easy Score* comes with nine feet of three-core cable or a coaxial cable for connection to a coin-operated timer. The display is 15.6 inches high, 12.4 inches wide, and 2.2 inches deep and housed in a shatterproof plastic case.

For more information, write Wyvern Designs, Fairfield House, Church Road, Pimperne, Blandford, Dorset DT11 8UB England. Telephone Blandford (258) 52055.



## Kramer Krane

Kramer Manufacturing has developed the *Kramer Krane*, a skill game incorporating an operator-adjustable claw and front-panel buttons.

Features include a flashing marquee header, a double coin-mech system, 3.5-inch locking caster wheels, and separate locking-cashbox and prize-storage compartments. Its dimensions are 79 inches by 33 inches by 28 inches.

The *Kramer Krane* has plexiglass panels and a hinged front door (with a lock) for loading prizes. Options include a ticket dispenser, a bill acceptor, and a multi-coin accumulator.

For more details, write Kramer Manufacturing Co., Inc., 1100 Towbin Ave., Lakewood, NJ 08701, or call in New Jersey (201) 367-7810; outside New Jersey call 800/631-2126.



## SaunaTone

Tan-Me, Inc., has introduced *SaunaTone*, a personal sauna that combines the benefits of dry heat and vibration in a compact, portable unit.

*SaunaTone* comes with an AM/FM stereo cassette, built-in speakers, and head phones. An optional token timer is available.

The temperature, stereo volume, and vibration are controlled by the client from inside the reinforced-fiberglass shell. The maximum temperature and total time can be preset by the owner. The unit comes with a one-year warranty.

For more information, write Tan-Me, Inc., 1703 Cope Ave., St. Paul, MN 55109, or call (612) 770-0234.





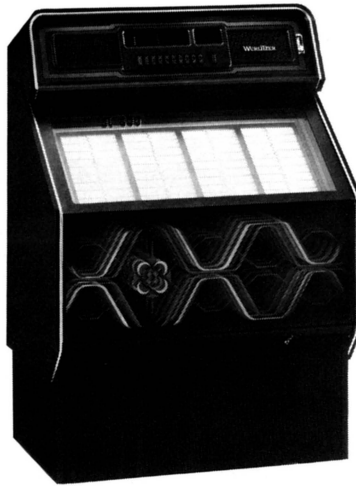


## Talking Courtesy Phone

T.A. Phones, Inc., formerly Tonk-A-Phones, has added the *Talking Courtesy Phone* to its line.

Designed for businesses wishing to offer a courtesy phone for customers, the *Talking Courtesy Phone* gives a 20-second electronic sales message each time the phone is used. The message can be programmed and changed by the operator. The phone is for local calls only and blocks out any long-distance calls.

For more information, write T.A. Phones, Inc., 4310 Shoreline Drive, Spring Park, MN 55384, or call (612) 471-0126.



## Wurlitzer SL 600

Deutsche Wurlitzer GmbH has introduced the Wurlitzer *SL 600* jukebox with 160 selections and 200 watts of power.

The *SL 600* is microprocessor-controlled and has a stereo transistorized amplifier with automatic level control and electronic overload protection. It includes a Shure magnetic pick-up, four loudspeakers in a two-way stereo system, and an electronic credit accumulator. The three-digit LED display indicates the credit selection and record playing.

Other features include an automatic top-tunes selection of location hits, an electronic popularity meter and coin counter, and a plug connector for an auxiliary amplifier, external speakers, and a microphone.

All *SL 600* models (and *SL 800* models) are electronically and mechanically prepared for Mars bill validators accepting \$1, \$2, and \$5 bills.

For more information, write Deutsche Wurlitzer, 503 W. Central Blvd., Orlando, FL 32801, or call (305) 843-4302 or (305) 423-5591.

## Baby Boom Challenge

Status Game Corporation has expanded its Status System library with *Baby Boom Challenge*.

Players enter Baby Boom University (BBU) as freshmen and must work through the challenge maze by successfully answering questions, correcting spelling, and defining words. Included in the maze are thousands of humorous surprise squares that may add or take away points or move the player forward or backward in the maze.

Players making it through the maze advance to the sophomore level. To graduate from each level, players must maintain a grade average of 80 or better. If time runs out, players can add additional coins to continue where they left off.

*Baby Boom Challenge* is available as a countertop, upright, cocktail, universal kit (horizontal or vertical), and as an update for the Status System. The update includes a new graphic that transforms an old game into BBU.

All graduates are entitled to a diploma from BBU, available from Status and its distributors. BBU T-shirts also are available.

For more information, write Status Game Corp., 56 Budney Road, Newington, CT 06111, or call (203) 666-1960 or 1-800/835-7434.



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# An answer to Roger Sharpe

by Joe Robbins

I think Roger Sharpe's commentary in the June 15 issue of *Play Meter* [page 82, "A decade of change: Are things really different?"] is typical of the response one would get from an intellectual living in the wilds of Connecticut.

Roger is not a real Yankee, however, and he has been around long enough in this industry to be able to take a more clear-sighted view than the myopic one of his article.

In a scattershot way he takes aim at the AGMA-AAMA, the AMOA, the state associations and anyone else that comes into his mind. I fear that Roger undertook the essay in an off-the-cuff spirit and without feeling the need to do any research. He certainly didn't dig for any facts, and if he interviewed even one important personality in our industry, he fails to mention him. I doubt that he took the time to do so, but if he had I'll bet his commentary might have had a different slant, that is, if he had written it at all.

It is easy to fault AGMA, AAMA, AMOA, etc. for not doing enough in the way of public relations. It is easy to point the finger and say, "It's all your fault that our industry doesn't have equal respectability with similar entertainment areas." It's easy, but is it fair? And is the situation really as bad as Roger says?

Well, I say it can't be that bad. I was president of AGMA-AAMA for four years. During that time, with the added tremendous effort of Glenn Braswell, the organization tackled the public-relations problem. And we attacked it not only with dollars, but with great personal efforts. Many of us worked very hard and long. Maybe you can't see all the results, and maybe some of the money was wasted, but we tried. God knows we tried. And, to some extent at least, we succeeded.

Almost every large shopping mall in the U.S. today has a gameroom. Mall gamerooms are doing well, and as tenants they are highly respected by mall developers. Thousands of convenience stores have anywhere from one to six games in them; they are really mini-arcades. Most U.S. airports have gamerooms. And it is a fact that there is almost no new legislative pressure on our industry today from

national, state, or local government.

When Roger postulates that there would be difficulties today in obtaining a gameroom license, he is just guessing. Very few operators are looking to open street-type gamerooms today.

Many have unselfishly lent their efforts to improving the image of this industry. With apologies to those I leave out, I'll name just a few: Sharon Harris, Bob Rondeau, Bill Cravens, Larry Van Brackel, Gene Urso, Norm Goldstein, Bob Lloyd, Paul Moriarity, Ira Bettelman, Jon Brady, and Ruben Franco.

Oh, yes, we haven't done it all, Roger, but we started way down in the mud, and I believe we've come a long way. And, yes, Roger, we've got a long way to go yet. But we'll not get there by wringing our hands and crying in despair and shame. We'll get there by digging in and working at it and by raising money from every direction to continue the fight.

If you want to help, Roger, you are welcome to join us. But please, before you lift up that vitriolic pen again, take a little time to find out what indeed went on and what is going on now.

My final plea to Roger Sharpe and all the Roger Sharpes in our industry is, to paraphrase a quote, please ask not what this industry can do for you. Ask what you can do for this industry.

*[Editor's note: Joe Robbins is president of the Sun Corporation of America (formerly Kitcorp) and is a past president of the American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA) and its predecessor, the Amusement Game Manufacturers Association (AGMA). After submitting this commentary, Robbins further added that the industry report referred to in Sharpe's June 15 commentary was commissioned by AGMA because it was the best approach the association could afford to counter the industry's public-relations problems. The alternative, he said, was a multi-million-dollar media campaign. "Hundreds, maybe thousands," used the report, Robbins said, adding that at their own expense he and others appeared at many local-government hearings to represent industry interests.]*



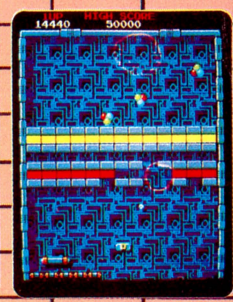
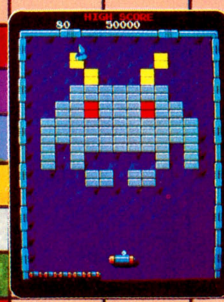
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